

HEAVENLY CREATURES

BY
STJEPAN
ŠEJIĆ

BOOK
TWO

DC
BLACK
LABEL



**HARLEY
QUINN**


BOOK TWO

STJEPAN ŠEJIĆ
STORY AND ART

GABRIELA DOWNIE
LETTERS

STJEPAN ŠEJIĆ
COVER AND VARIANT COVER

HARLEY QUINN CREATED BY
PAUL DINI AND BRUCE TIMM



IT STARTS WITH
FANTASIES, DOCTOR--
THAT WISHFUL THINKING THAT
MAKES YOUR MUSCLES *TWITCH*
AS YOU IMAGINE WRAPPING YOUR
HANDS AROUND YOUR
ENEMY'S *NECK*.

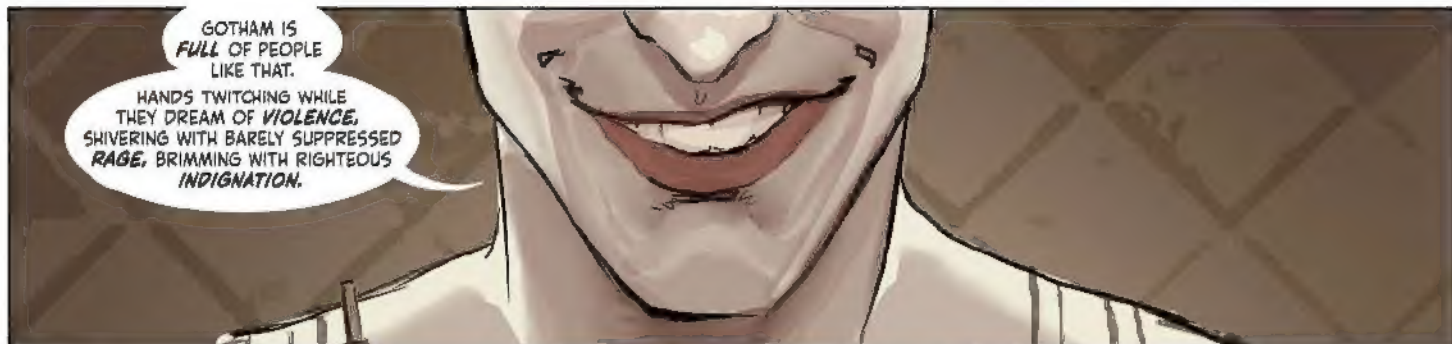
I DON'T
HAVE ENEMIES, MR.
JAY.

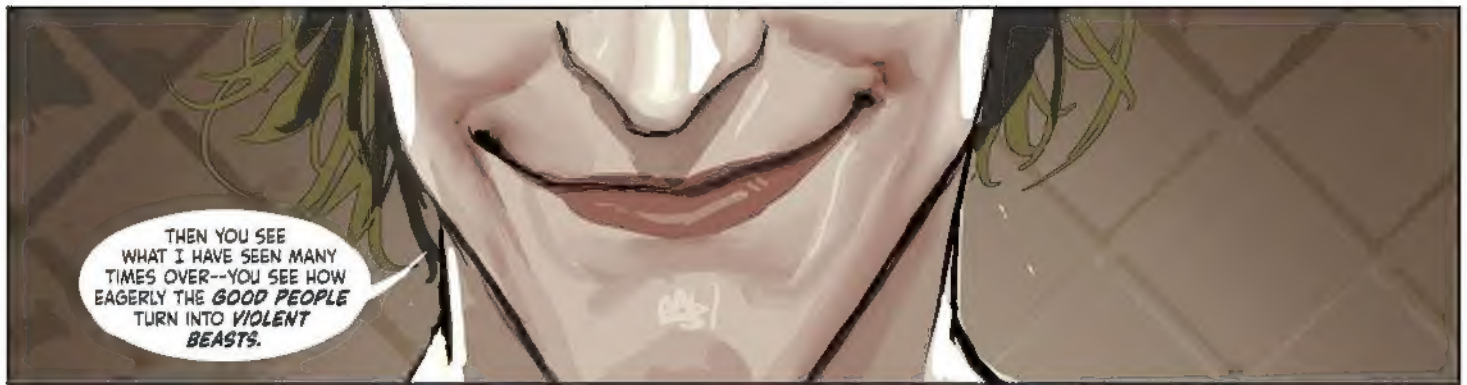
SURE YOU DO!
EVERYONE DOES! THOSE
PEOPLE YOU MEET AND THINK,
*WOULDN'T THINGS BE SO
MUCH BETTER IF THEY
WERE DEAD?*

THOSE
PEOPLE WHOSE
VERY PRESENCE
TURNS THINGS
SOUR.

WE ALL KNOW
THEM. AND IT STARTS
WITH THEM. THEY ARE THE
FIRST ONES TO *TEST*
YOU.

WHAT DOES
THAT HAVE TO DO
WITH *GOTHAM*
CITY?







AFTER ALL,
GOTHAM'S A CITY
WHERE ANGELS FLY
ON WINGS OF
ICARUS...

UP, UP
THEY GO AND
THEN...

...DOWN,
DOWN,
DOWN
THEY FALL.

UNTIL WE
ALL STAND REVEALED
FOR WHO WE TRULY
ARE **UNDERNEATH.**

DON'T!
TOUCH!

MY!

PLUG IN!!

LATER IN LIFE, IN *DARK TIMES*,
MY MIND WOULD GO BACK TO
THIS CONVERSATION.

SO ALL THE GOOD PEOPLE
ARE JUST **MONSTERS**
IN HIDING?

UNTIL THE
RUBBER BANDS OF
THEIR MASKS
SNAP.

I
MEAN...
ALL THE **NORMAL**
PEOPLE DREAM OF GOING
CRAZY EVERY NOW AND
THEN...PROBLEM IS, WHEN
THEY DO, THERE'S **NO**
GOING BACK.

AND WHAT
DO **YOU** DREAM
OF?

OH...SIMPLE
STUFF...HONEST
SMILES...
ANYHOW, I'M
A BIT TIRED, MAYBE
WE CAN CONTINUE
THIS LATER.

SURE, MR.
JAY...SEE YOU
SOON.

YOU
KNOW WHERE
TO FIND ME.

I'D DWELL ON THE SMALL DETAILS
OF WHAT HE'D SAID, WONDERING IF
THEY CARRIED LARGER MEANINGS...

BUT NOT THAT DAY.

THAT DAY I
WAS **PISSED.**

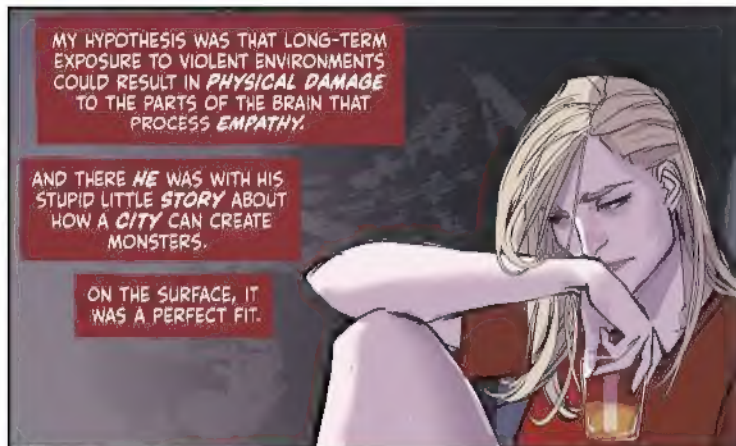
IT FELT LIKE SOME SAD RETELLING OF
THE STANFORD PRISON EXPERIMENT,
WRAPPED IN ANECDOTAL NONSENSE--
THE SORT OF **GARBAGE** HE'D FED
HIS PREVIOUS THERAPISTS.

IT WAS DOWNRIGHT
OFFENSIVE.



IT WAS SO DAMNED
INFURIATING...

...BECAUSE I FELT SO
DAMNED CLOSE!



MY HYPOTHESIS WAS THAT LONG-TERM
EXPOSURE TO VIOLENT ENVIRONMENTS
COULD RESULT IN *PHYSICAL DAMAGE*
TO THE PARTS OF THE BRAIN THAT
PROCESS *EMPATHY*.

AND THERE *HE* WAS WITH HIS
STUPID LITTLE *STORY* ABOUT
HOW A *CITY* CAN CREATE
MONSTERS.

ON THE SURFACE, IT
WAS A PERFECT FIT.



ACCORDING TO HIM, MADNESS
IS OUR *DEFAULT STATE*. ALWAYS
THERE, BUBBLING UNDER THE
SURFACE.



BUT THEN AGAIN,
WHAT DID I EXPECT?

SIX PREVIOUS DOCTORS AGREED HE
WAS INCAPABLE OF *REAL FEELINGS*
OR OF ACKNOWLEDGING THE
HUMANITY OF OTHERS.

OF *COURSE* HE WOULD SEE
EVERYONE AS MONSTERS
WEARING MASKS.



A MONTH INTO MY WORK AT
ARKHAM ASYLUM AND I WAS
BACK TO SQUARE ONE. NOT EVEN
CLOSE TO FINDING A SINGLE
PROMISING CANDIDATE FOR MY
RESEARCH.

I NEEDED *SOMEONE* TO TELL
ME WHO THEY WERE *BEFORE*
THEY...WELL...SNAPPED.



BUT THAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH THESE
SO-CALLED "*SUPER-VILLAINS*":
THEY'RE MORE INTERESTED IN TELLING
YOU ABOUT WHO THEY ARE *NOW*.



CLICK

THIS IS **WGBS** NEWS AT ELEVEN WITH **JACK RYDER**.

GOOD EVENING, EVERYONE. ON THIS SAD DAY, ALL OF GOTHAM IS **REELING** FROM TRAGIC EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE EARLIER AT GOTHAM SUPERIOR COURT.

WHAT STARTED AS A SIMPLE PRESS CONFERENCE BECAME THE STUFF OF **NIGHTMARES** WHEN AN ATTEMPT WAS MADE ON THE LIFE OF DISTRICT ATTORNEY **HARVEY DENT** BY ALLEGED CRIME BOSS **SALVATORE "SAL" MARONI**.

HERE IS WGBS'S FOOTAGE OF SAID EVENT. **BE WARNED:** EVEN THOUGH WE'RE NO STRANGERS TO **EXTREME VIOLENCE** HERE ON GOTHAM BROADCAST SYSTEM, THIS MAY BE TOO MUCH FOR SOME VIEWERS. DISCRETION IS ADVISED.

MR. DENT! **SUMMER GLEESON, WGBS.** DO YOU HAVE A MOMENT?

I'LL MAKE ONE.

THE CITY'S BUILDING COMMISSION HAS CALLED FOR AN INQUIRY INTO THE BUSINESS DEALINGS OF **SALVATORE MARONI**.

IS YOUR OFFICE A PART OF THE INVESTIGATIVE EFFORT?

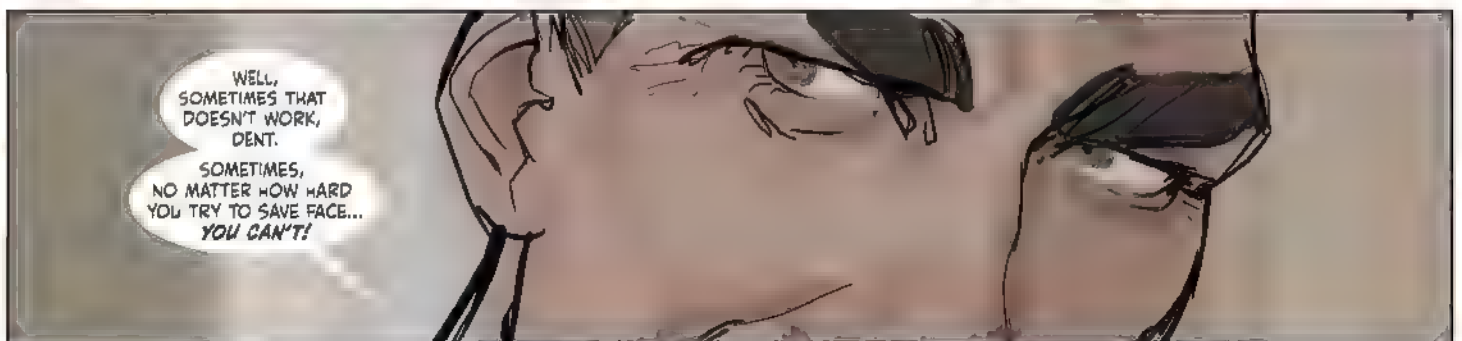
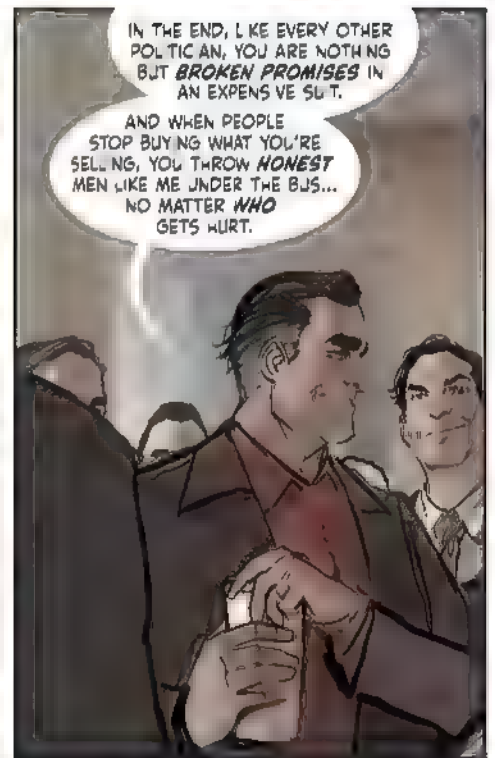
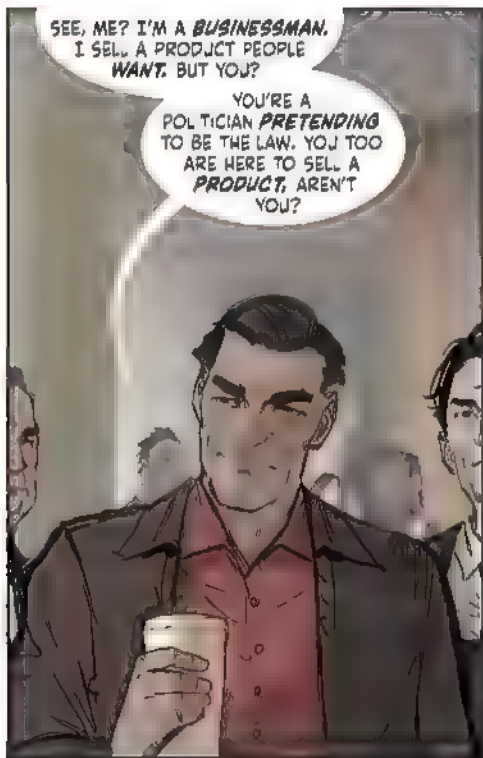
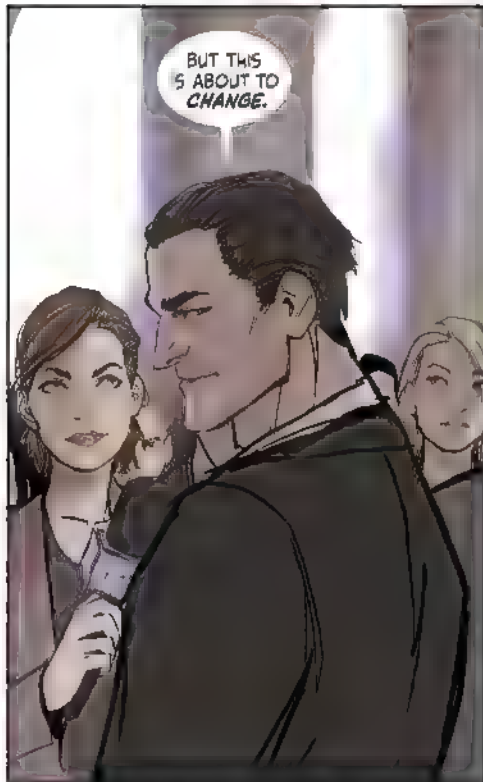
YES AND NO.

MY OFFICE IS BUILDING OUR **OWN** CASE AGAINST MR. MARONI FOR CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES THAT EXTEND **FAR BEYOND** RIGGING CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT BIDDING.

SUCH AS?

THAT I'M NOT ABLE TO DISCLOSE RIGHT NOW...

BUT I CAN TELL YOU THIS: **SAL MARONI** IS AN **IMPORTANT** MAN. IMPORTANT ENOUGH FOR **THE POLICE** TO DELIVER HIS **COFFEE**. IT SEEMS...





DR. MATHEWS WAS RIGHT. IT WAS EVERYWHERE, AND I COULDN'T STOP WATCHING. AND THE ATTACK ON DENT WAS ONLY THE *START*.

DOCTORS CONFIRM THE CHEMICAL USED WAS NOT A TYPICAL HYDROCHLORIC ACID, BUT A CURIOUS *WHY* MOST LIKELY ORIGINATING FROM *AXIS* CHEMICAL FACILITIES.

BECAUSE OF THE UNIQUELY DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF THIS SUBSTANCE, DISTRICT ATTORNEY DENT HAS BEEN PLACED IN A *MEDICALLY INDUCED COMA*.

SALVATORE MARONI WAS TAKEN INTO POLICE CUSTODY, WHICH IN ANY OTHER CITY WOULD SERVE AS EPILOGUE TO THIS SAD STORY.

BUT THIS IS *GOTHAM*. AFTER ALL, AND HERE THINGS HAVE A WAY OF ESCALATING.

JUST ONE HOUR AFTER MARONI'S ARREST, WE RECEIVED NEWS THAT HIS POLICE TRANSPORT VEHICLE HAD BEEN *COMMANDEERED* BY UNKNOWN ASSAULTS.

LATER, THIS VIDEO WAS DELIVERED *ANONYMOUSLY* TO THE *WGBS* STUDIO.

ONCE AGAIN, *VIEWER DISCRETION IS ADVISED*.

CITIZENS OF GOTHAM: FOR YEARS WE OF THE *GOOTHAM CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT* HAVE SERVED, PROTECTED, AND *BLED* FOR THIS CITY ONLY TO SEE OUR SACRIFICES *MOCKED* BY THE SAME CRIMINALS RETURNING TO OUR STREETS AGAIN AND AGAIN--ALL TOO OFTEN THANKS TO THE LEGAL MEDDLING OF BLEEDING-HEART *FOOLS*.

TODAY, AFTER THE ATTACK ON DISTRICT ATTORNEY DENT, WE ARE *DONE* BEING MOCKED.

OVER AND OVER, THE MERCY OF OUR JUDICIAL SYSTEM HAS *ILL* SERVED YOU ALL.

CRIMINALS DON'T FEAR THE HAND OF JUSTICE BECAUSE JUSTICE LACKS THE MECHANISM TO TRULY *PUNISH* THEM.

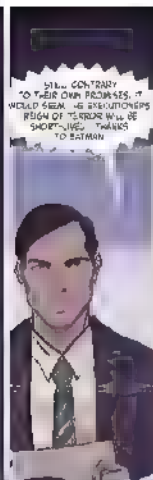
WELL, FROM NOW ON, WE WILL BE THAT MECHANISM. *WE* WILL BE THAT HAND.

CRIMINALS OF GOTHAM, YOU'VE MET YOUR JUDGES AND YOUR JURIES. NOW, MEET YOUR *EXECUTIONERS*.

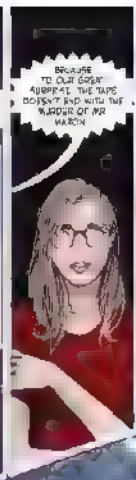
WE WILL START WITH SAL HERE. THIS IS YOUR BIG MOMENT, SAL! ANY LAST WORDS?

FUCK YOU!

THEY PIXELATED THE MOMENT OF THE SHOT, BUT THE *SOUND* REMAINED...



STILL CONTINUED
TO THEIR OWN REQUESTS. IT
WOULD SEEM HE RESOLUTIONERS
WISH OF "TERROR" WILL BE
SHORT-LIVED. THANKS
TO BATMAN



BECAUSE
TO OUR GOVT
APPROPRIATE THE TAPES
DOESN'T END WITH THE
WOUNDS OF THE
MARCH



ARGH!



UNFORTUNATELY
THE FOOTAGE ENDS WHEN
THE CAMERA IS KNOCKED
OVER
BUT THERE
YOU HAVE IT -
HOLLAHE ASSETS -
VIOLENT!



IT'S THE BR
2000
ARGH!

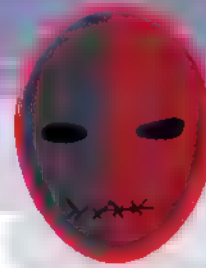




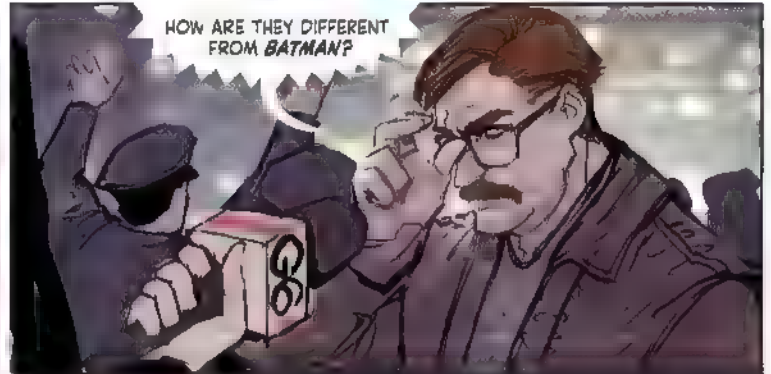
THESE EXECUTIONERS ARE SEEN
IN A **POSITIVE LIGHT** BY 68
PERCENT OF GOTHAMITES
WE SURVEYED.

AT THE SAME
TIME, G.C.P.D.'S
APPROVAL NUMBERS
ARE AS LOW AS
31 PERCENT.

OUR REPORTER
SUMMER GLEESON TRIED TO GET SOME
INSIGHT ON THIS MATTER FROM THE POLICE
COMMISSIONER, **JAMES GORDON**.



GOTHAM P.D. HAS
BEEN COOPERATING WITH A
VIGILANTE FOR YEARS. HOW ARE
THESE ROGUE OFFICERS ANY
DIFFERENT?



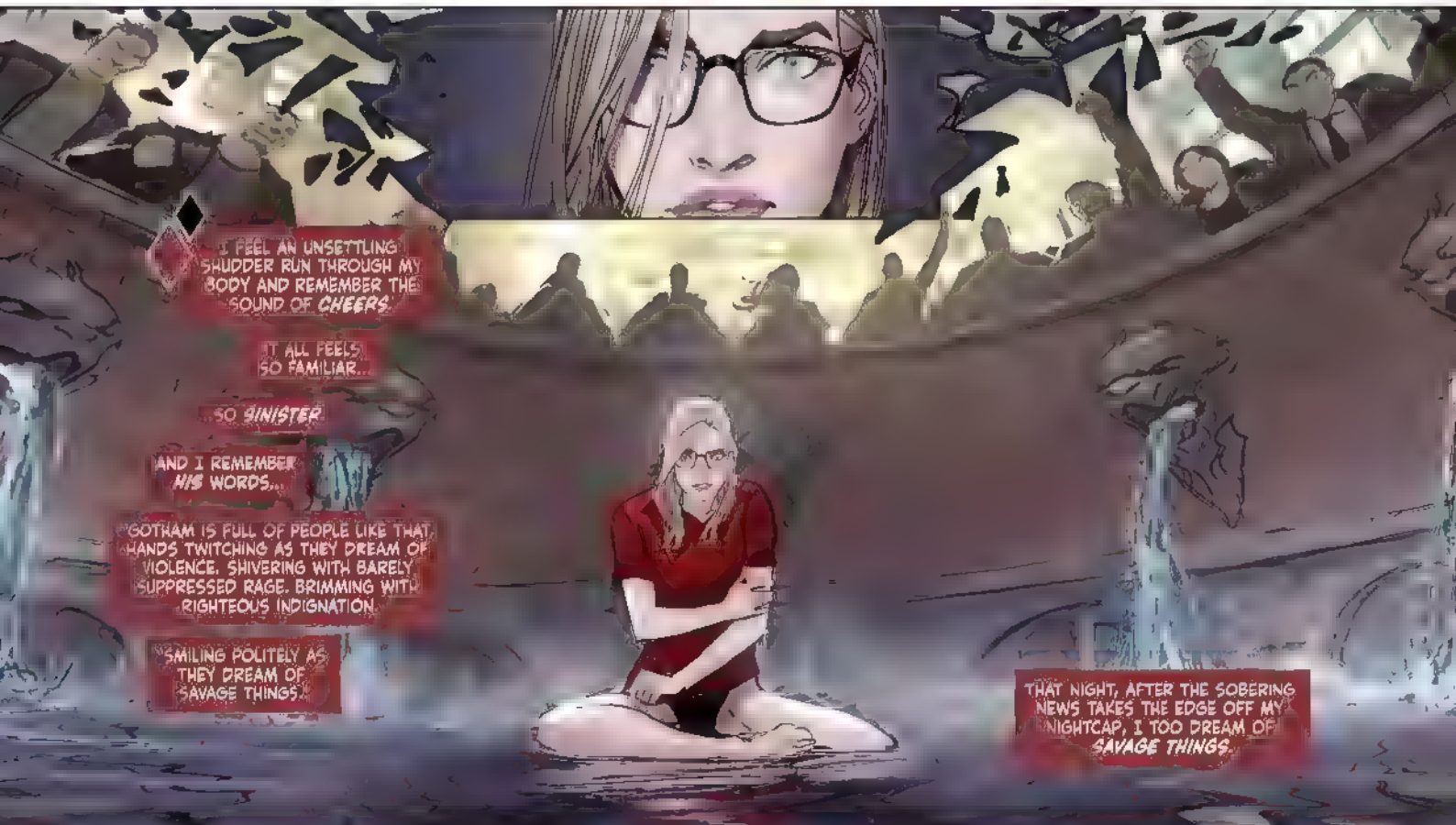
HOW ARE THEY DIFFERENT
FROM **BATMAN**?



BATMAN IS NOT A
MURDERER.

BUT
COMMISSIONER--

**NO MORE
QUESTIONS!**



I FEEL AN UNSETTLING
SHUDDER RUN THROUGH MY
BODY AND REMEMBER THE
SOUND OF **CHEERS.**

IT ALL FEELS
SO FAMILIAR...

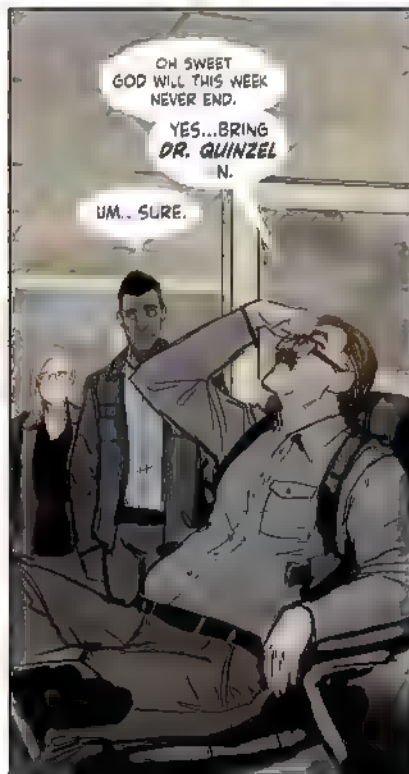
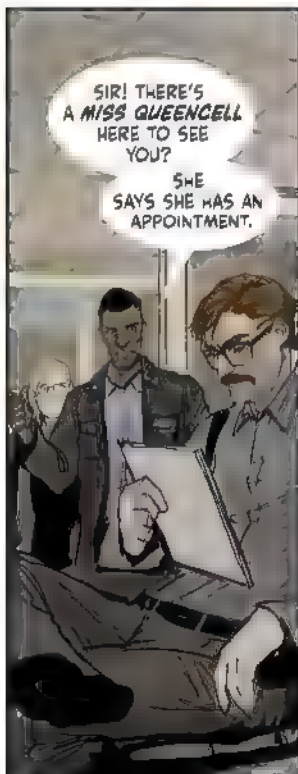
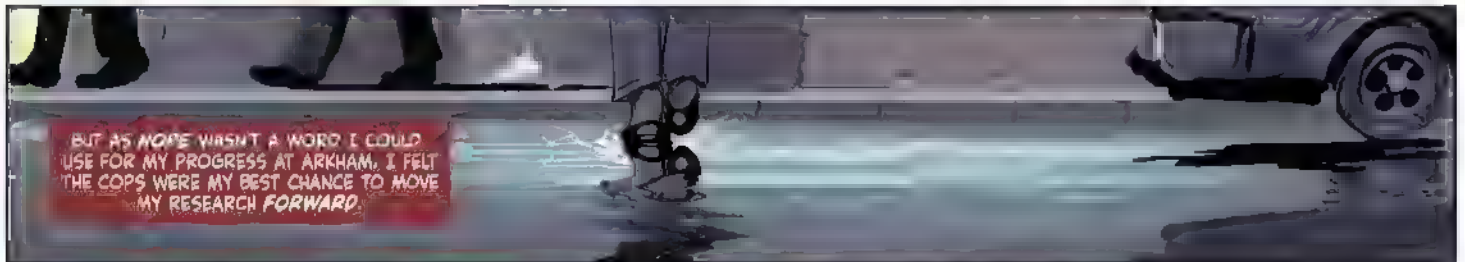
SO **SINISTER.**

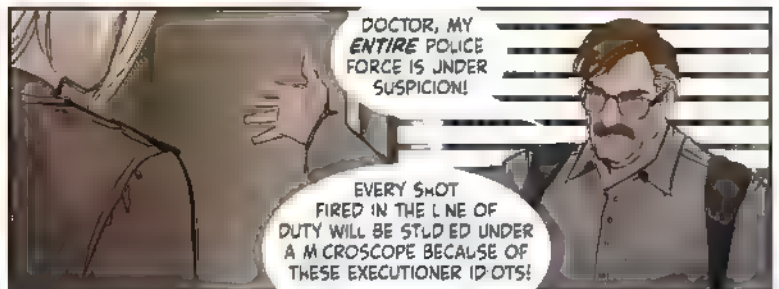
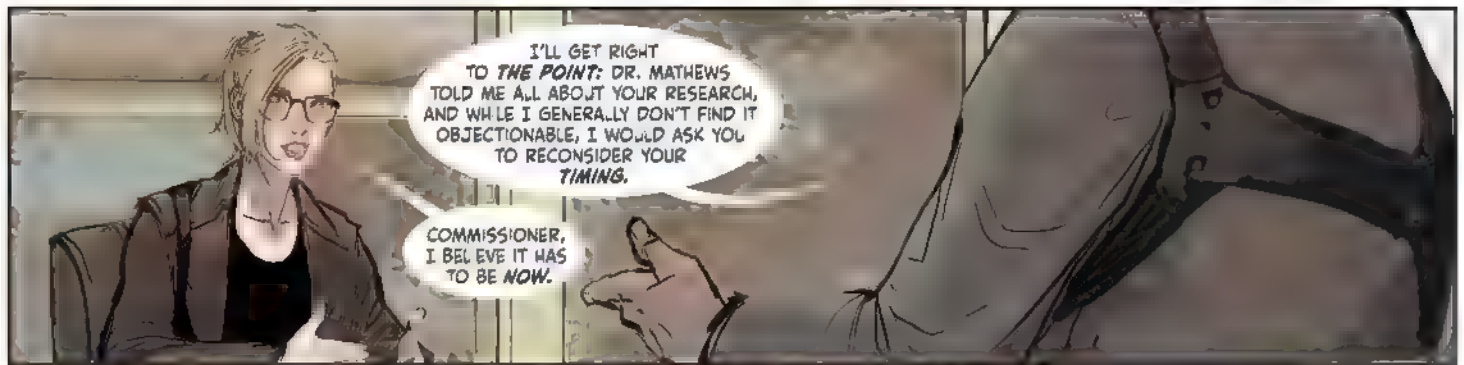
AND I REMEMBER
HIS WORDS...

GOTHAM IS FULL OF PEOPLE LIKE THAT.
HANDS TWITCHING AS THEY DREAM OF
VIOLENCE. SHIVERING WITH BARELY
SUPPRESSED RAGE. BRIMMING WITH
RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION.

SMILING POLITELY AS
THEY DREAM OF
SAVAGE THINGS.

THAT NIGHT, AFTER THE SOBERING
NEWS TAKES THE EDGE OFF MY
NIGHTCAP, I TOO DREAM OF
SAVAGE THINGS.

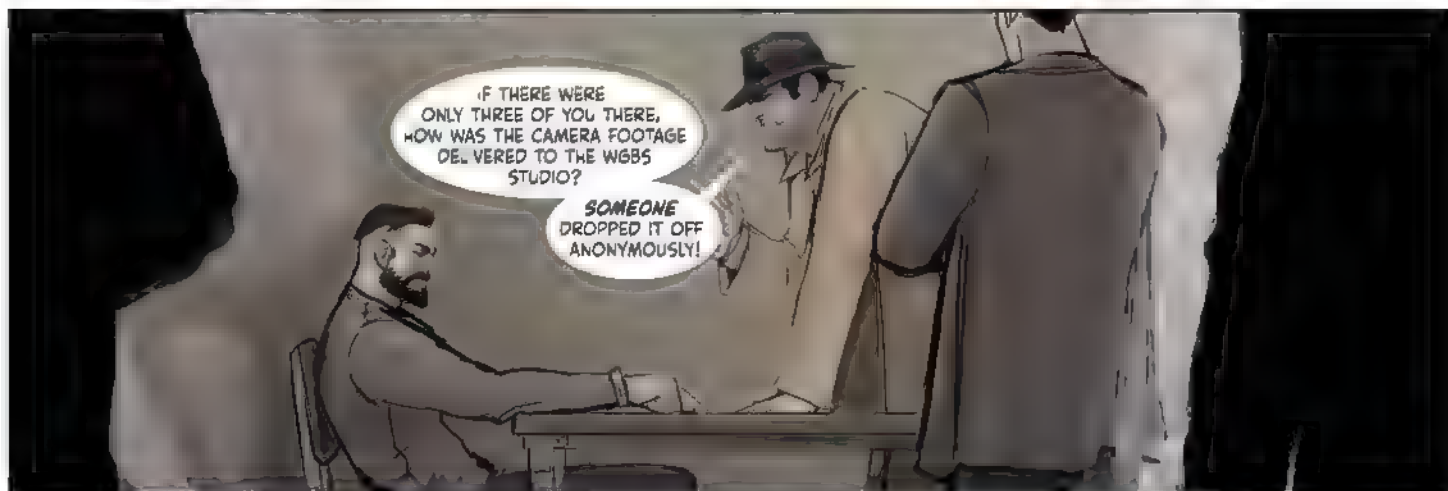






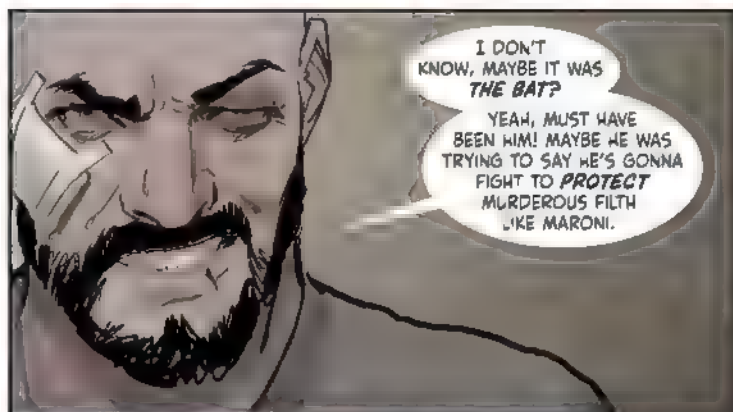
MEET SERGEANT
HOSKINS OF THE G.C.P.D.
S.W.A.T. TEAM. DECORATED
COP. A HERO OF
THE FORCE.

HE WAS
ONE OF THE
THREE EXECUTIONERS
APPREHENDED BY
BATMAN.



IF THERE WERE
ONLY THREE OF YOU THERE,
HOW WAS THE CAMERA FOOTAGE
DELIVERED TO THE WGBS
STUDIO?

SOMEONE
DROPPED IT OFF
ANONYMOUSLY!



I DON'T
KNOW, MAYBE IT WAS
THE BAT?

YEAH, MUST HAVE
BEEN HIM! MAYBE HE WAS
TRYING TO SAY HE'S GONNA
FIGHT TO PROTECT
MURDEROUS FILTH
LIKE MARONI.



OR NOT?

MAYBE THERE'S
MORE OF US READY TO
DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE
DONE!

AND WHAT
WOULD THAT
BE?



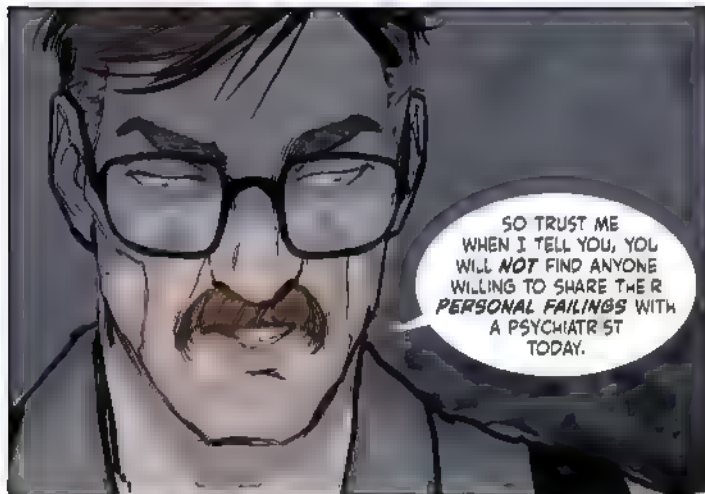
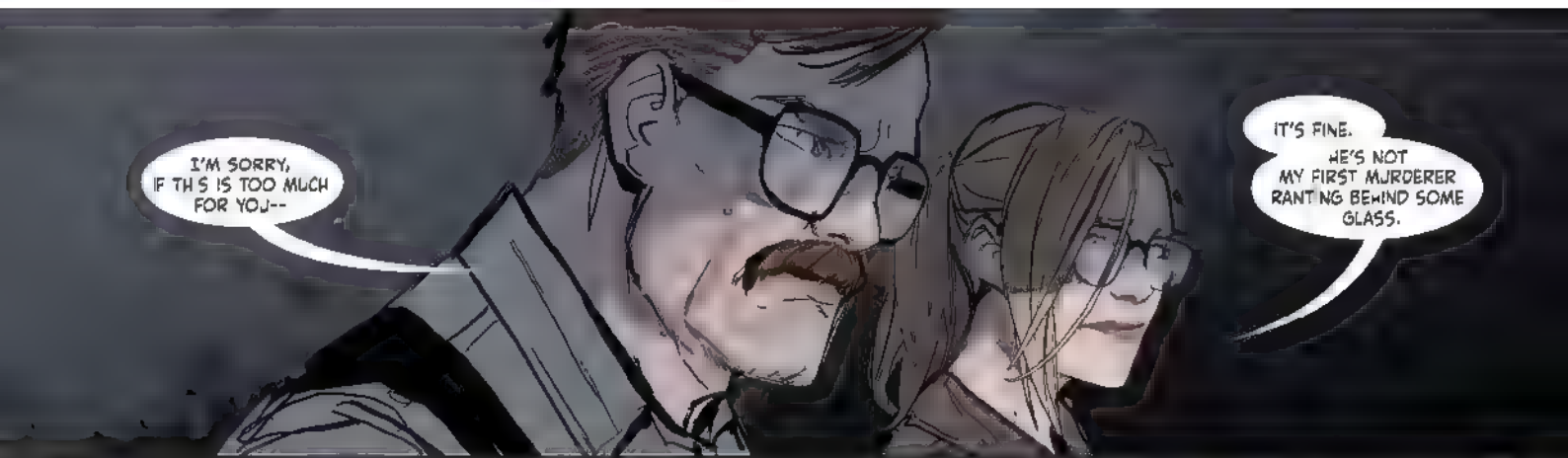
WHAT
WOULD THAT
BE?

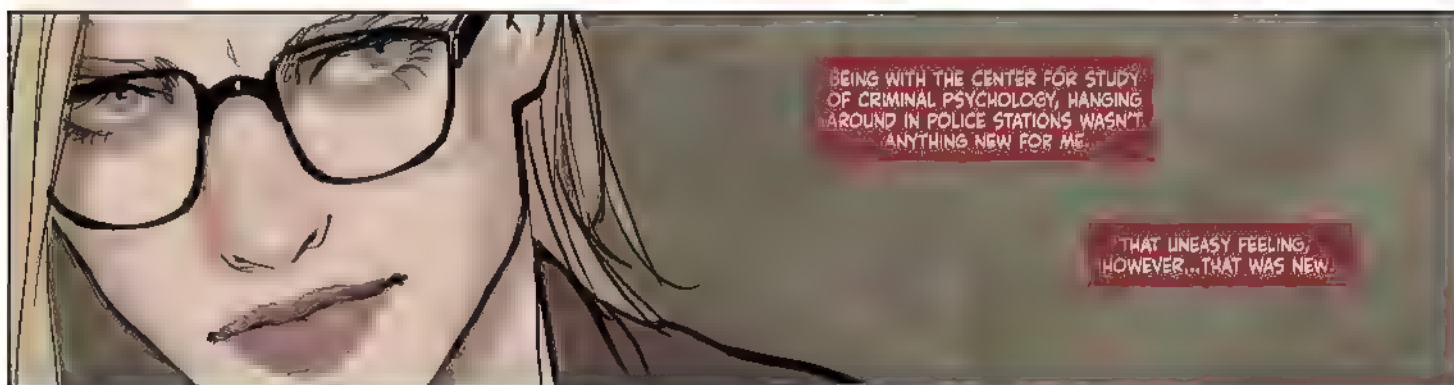
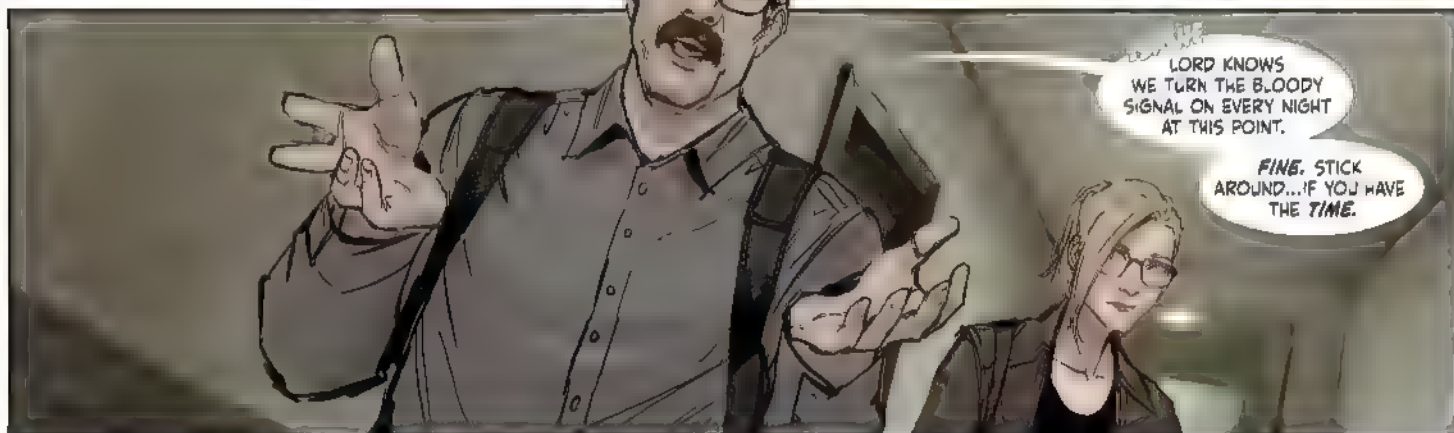
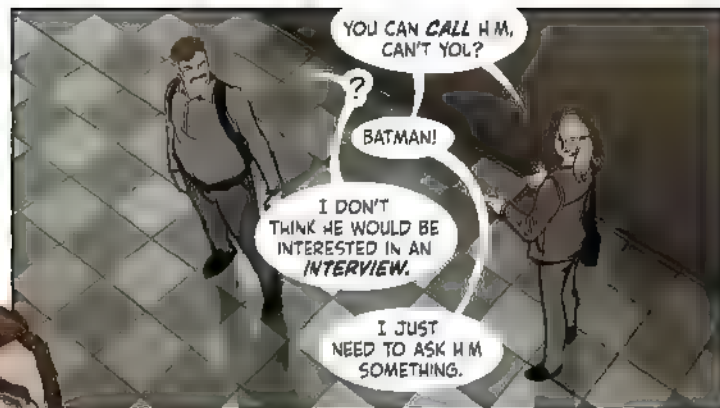
TAKE
THEM OUT! FOR
GOOD!

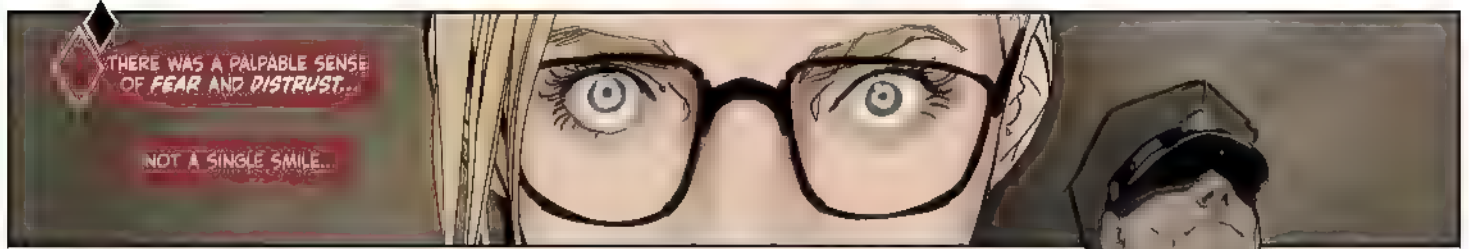
DO TO THEM
WHAT THEY WOULD DO
TO YOU WITHOUT
HESITATION!

YOU THINK SOMEONE
SOMEONE LIKE MR. FREEZE
OR ZSASZ OR THE JOKER WOULD
GIVE YOU A CHANCE IF YOU WERE
ON THE BUSINESS END OF
THEIR WEAPONS?

ALL OF THEM
ARE IRREDEEMABLE,
MERCILESS KILLERS AND
YOU KNOW IT!







A WAVE OF PANIC WASHES OVER ME AS I THINK, WHAT IF HE RECOGNIZES ME?

BEING THE DOCTOR OF THE MAN WHO HELD YOU AT GUNPOINT IS TROUBLESOME ENOUGH...

...NOT TELLING ANYONE ABOUT IT WHILE CONDUCTING A STUDY ON THAT SAME MAN IS A PROBLEM.

GORDON.
NEW
DETECTIVE?

NO. A SHR NK.
DR. HARLEEN
QUINZEL.

MAYBE, UNLIKE MR. JAY, BATMAN NEVER TOOK A GOOD LOOK AT MY FACE THAT NIGHT...

...I HOPE?

FROM
ARKHAM?

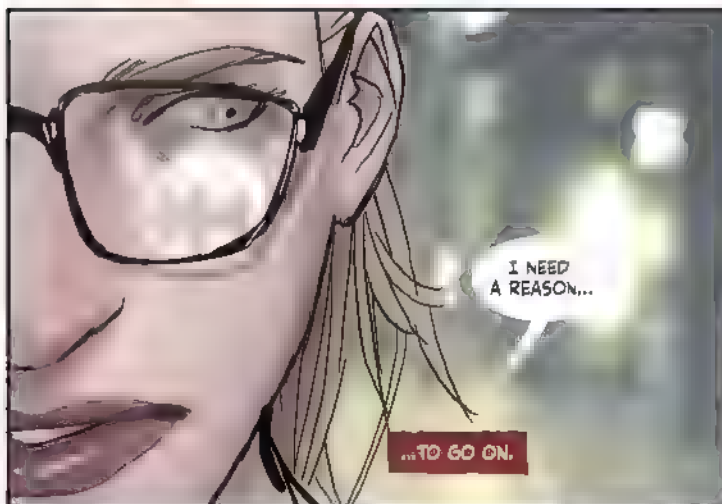
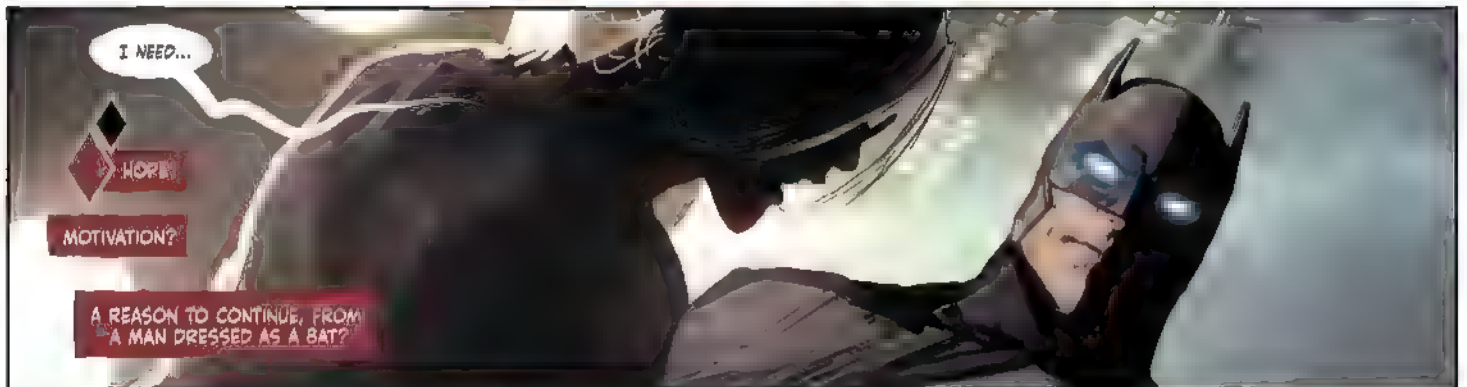
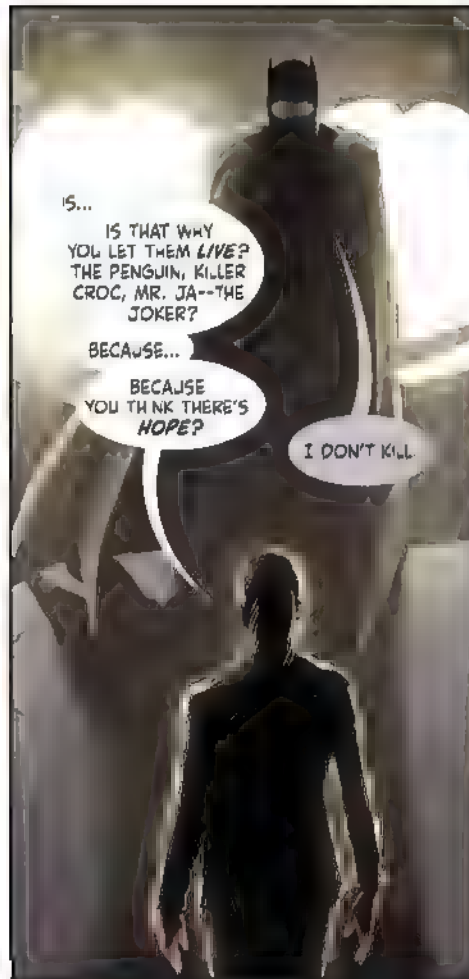
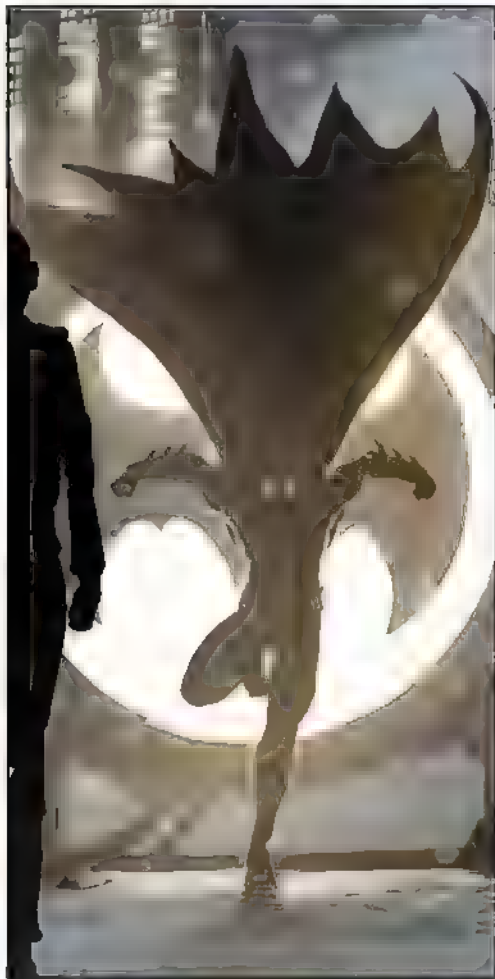
YES,
BUT HOW DID
YOU--

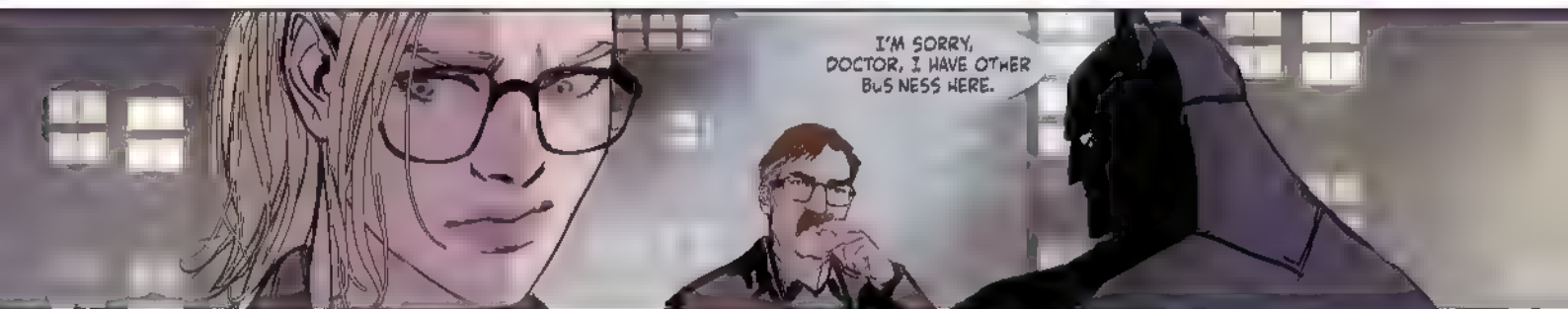
THE GOOD
DOCTOR HERE
WANTED TO ASK YOU
SOMETHING.
GO ON!

IT'D WAITED FOR HOURS. NOW I WAS FINALLY ASKING HIM THE QUESTION.

IT WAS A SIMPLE QUESTION, AND I NEEDED HIS ANSWER. I NEEDED IT BECAUSE HE IS THE CRUCIAL PIECE OF THE MASSIVE PUZZLE THAT IS GOTHAM.

DO YOU
THINK THEY CAN
BE HELPED?



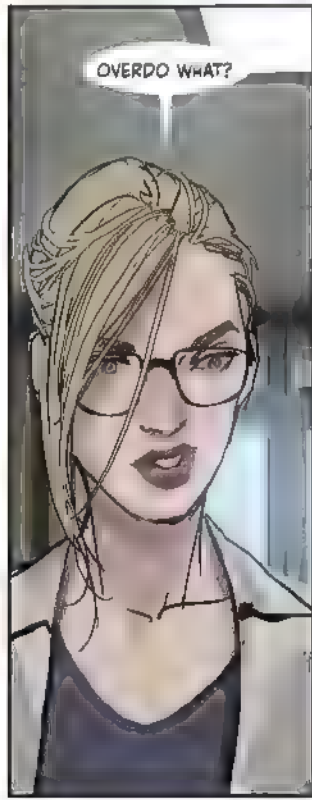
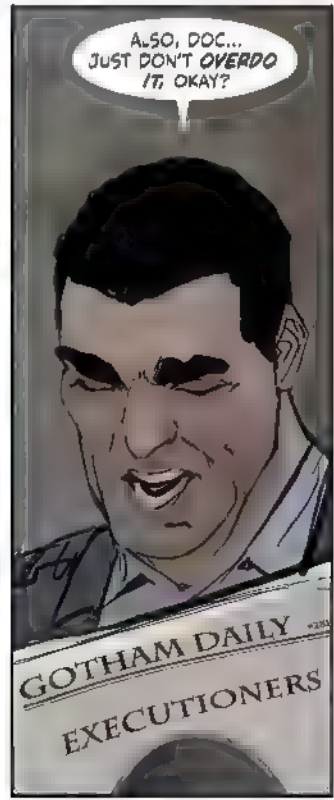
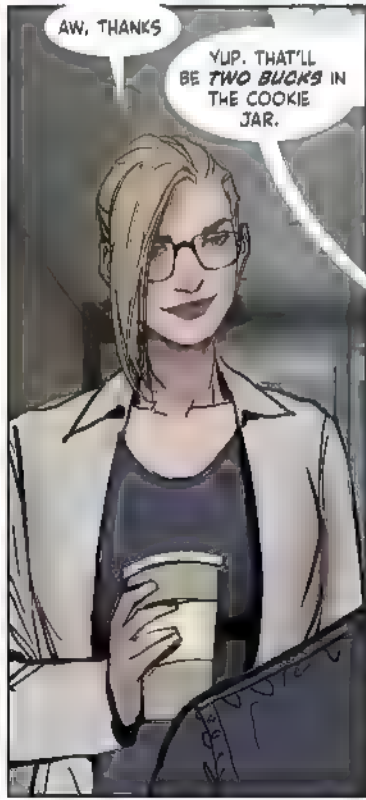
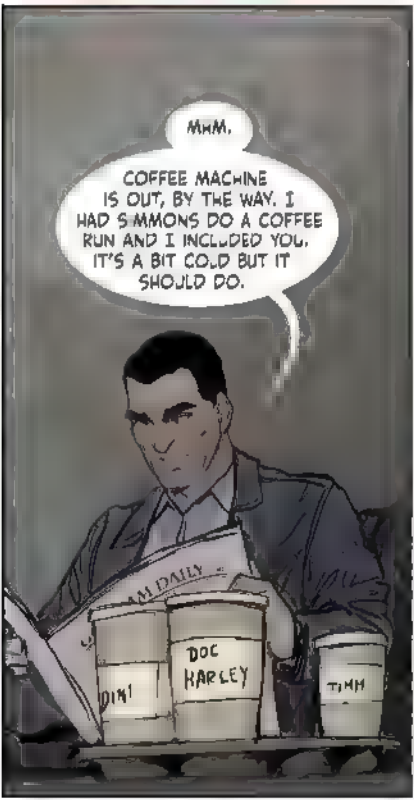
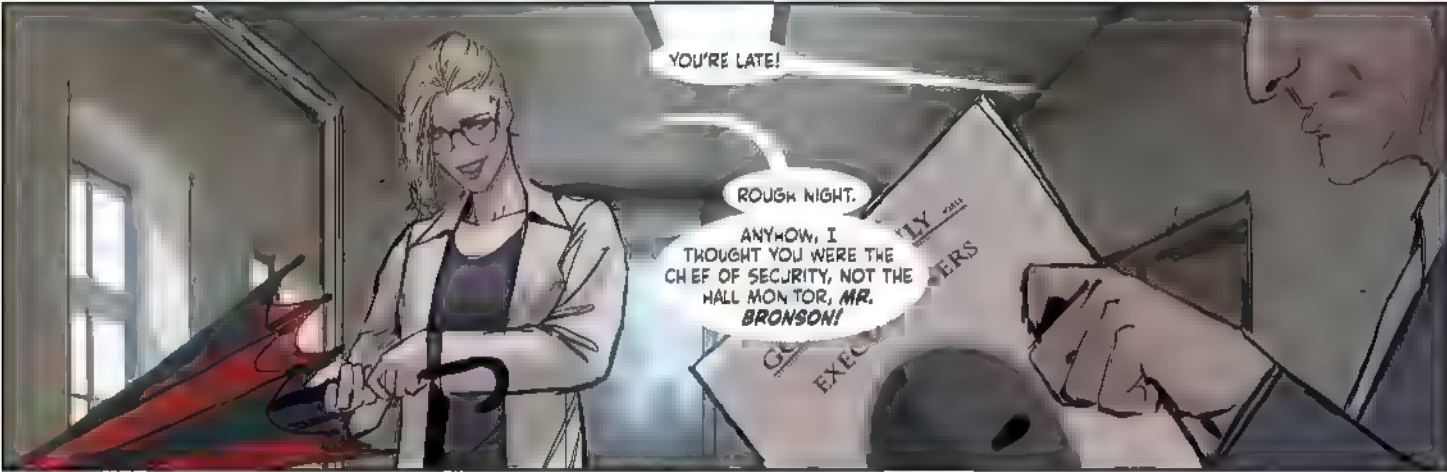
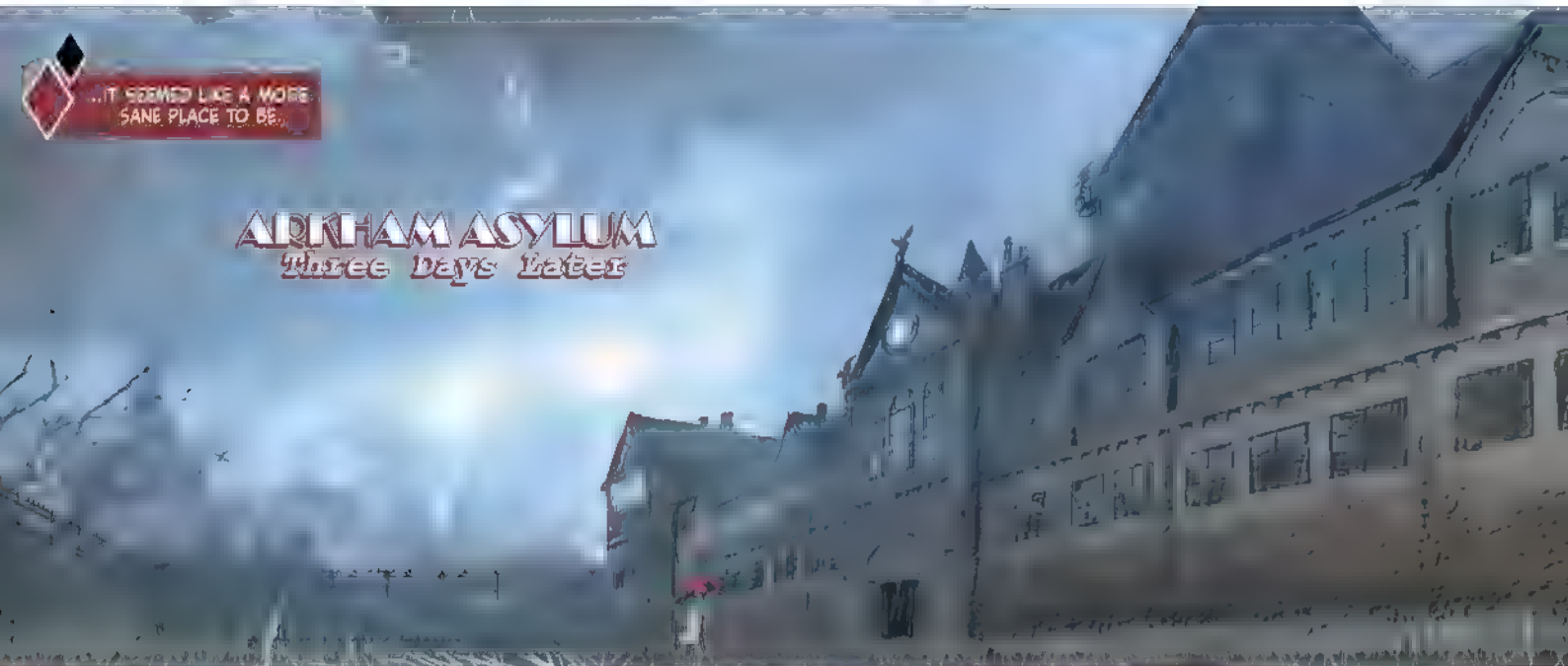




...IT SEEMED LIKE A MORE
SANE PLACE TO BE.

ARKHAM ASYLUM

Three Days Later





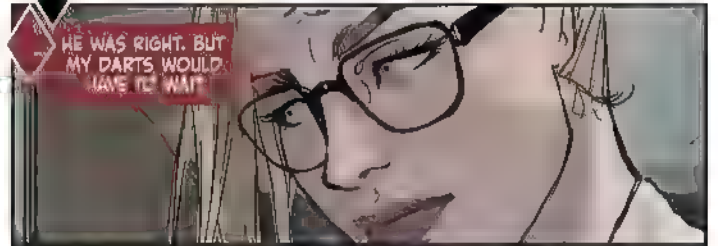
I'VE ALWAYS HAD A SENSITIVE NOSE FOR BULLSHIT AND OTHER THINGS...

ONE OF THOSE THINGS BEING THE SMELL OF ALCOHOL SWEAT...

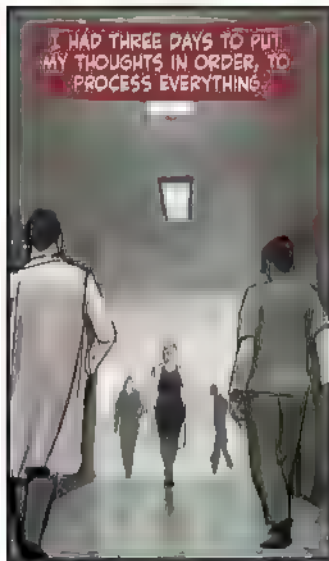


REMEMBER WHEN I TOLD YOU I COPE WITH THIS PLACE THROUGH WHISKEY AND DARTS?

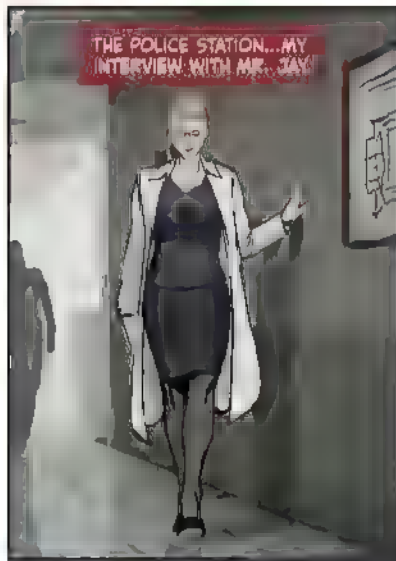
YOU MAY WANT TO FIND YOUR DARTS, DOC.



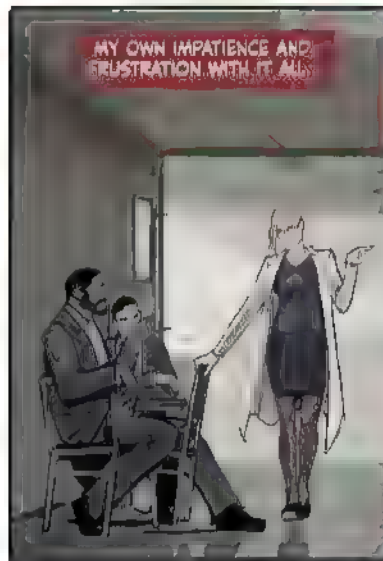
HE WAS RIGHT. BUT MY DARTS WOULD HAVE TO WAIT.



I HAD THREE DAYS TO PUT MY THOUGHTS IN ORDER, TO PROCESS EVERYTHING.



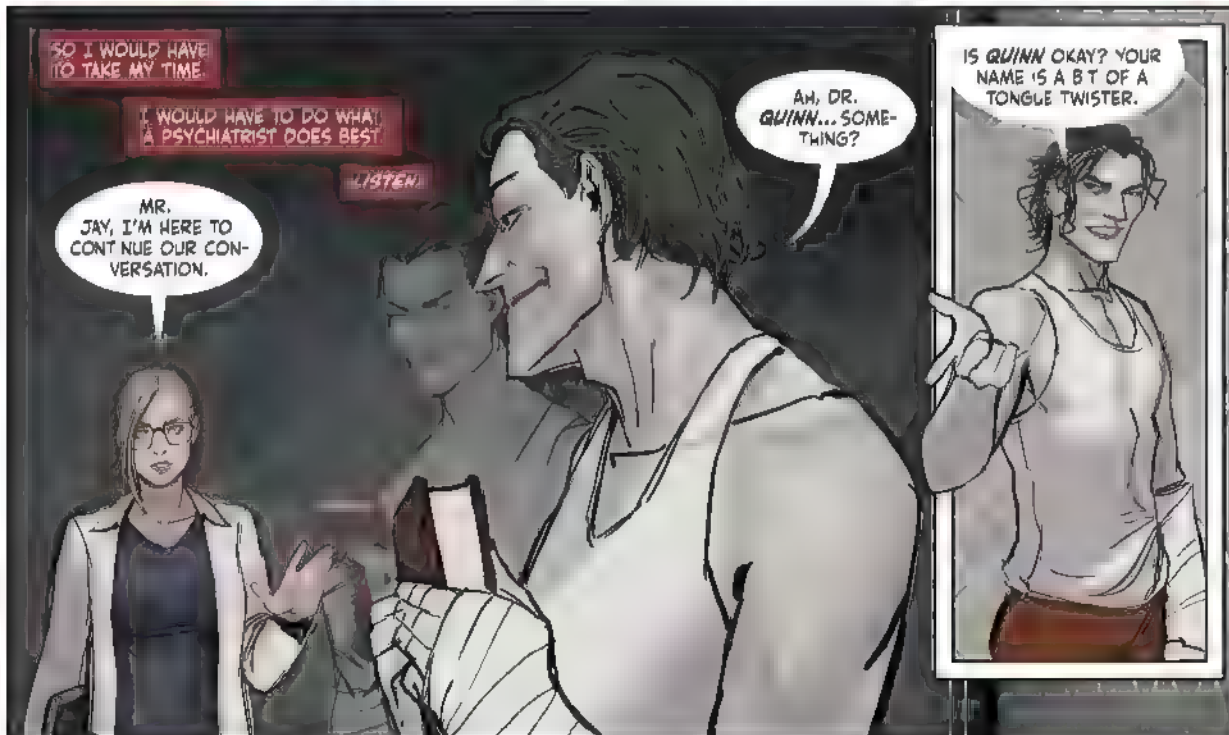
THE POLICE STATION...MY INTERVIEW WITH MR. JAY.



MY OWN IMPATIENCE AND FRUSTRATION WITH IT ALL.



IT WASN'T LIKELY THAT HE'D JUST TELL ME ABOUT THE MOMENT HE SHED HIS OWN MASK AND HOWLED AT THE MOON WITH ALL THE OTHER MONSTERS.



SO I WOULD HAVE TO TAKE MY TIME.

I WOULD HAVE TO DO WHAT A PSYCHIATRIST DOES BEST.

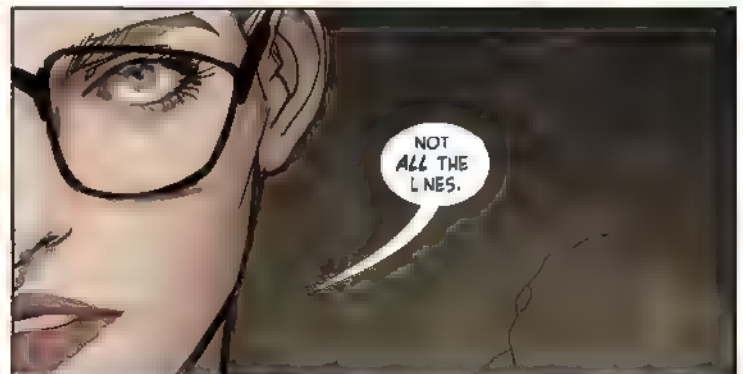
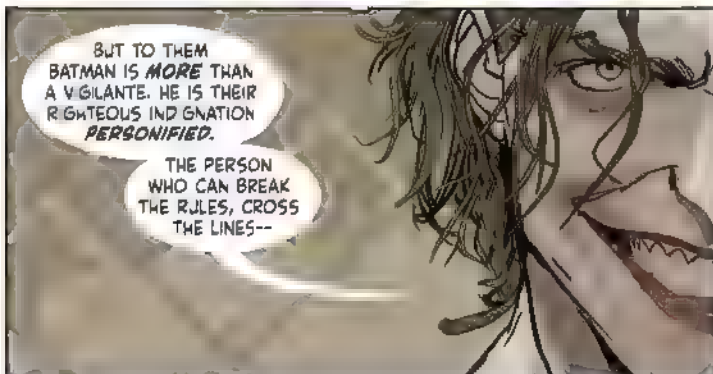
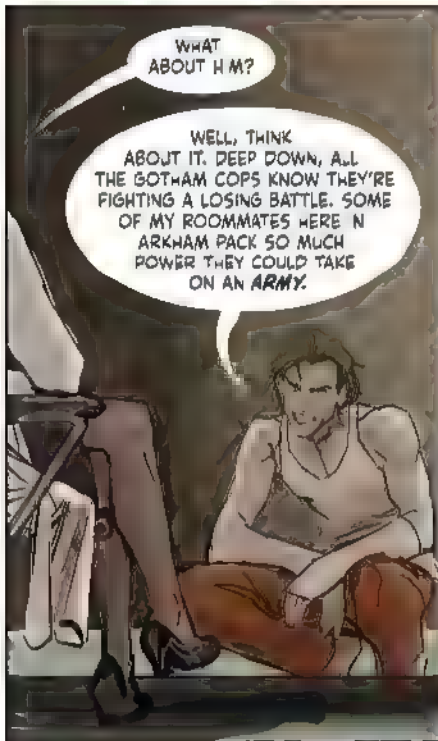
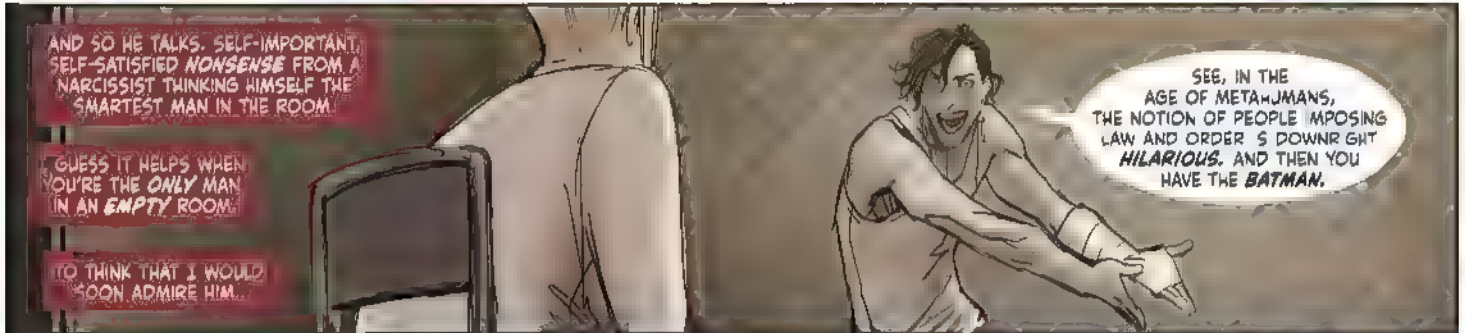
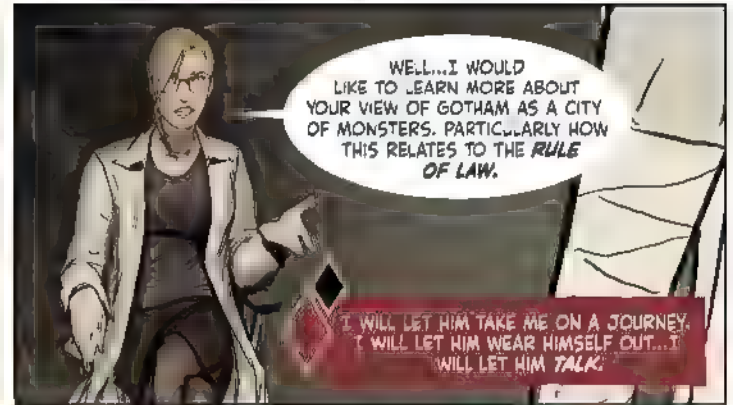
LISTEN.

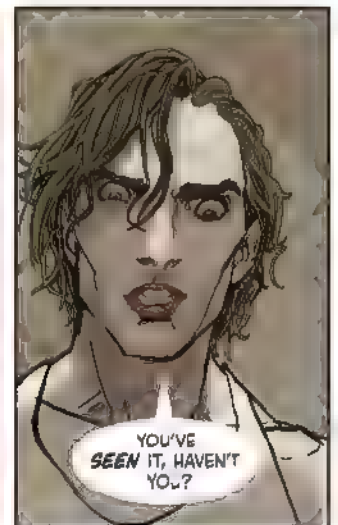
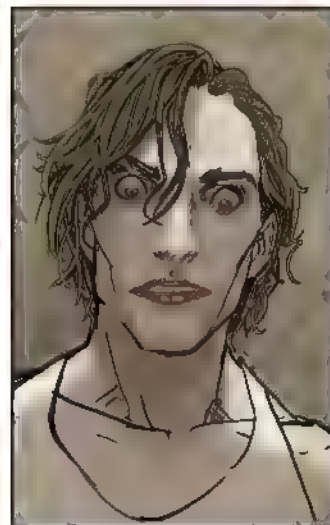
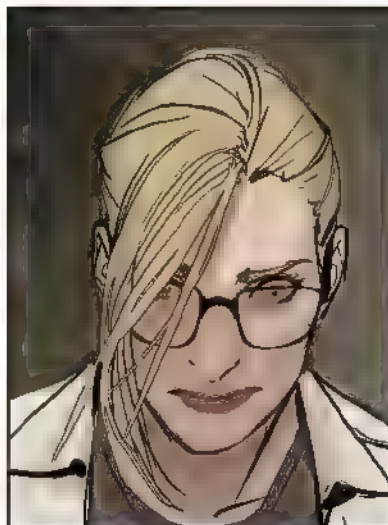
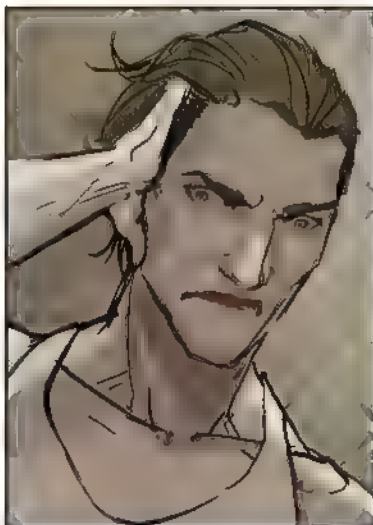
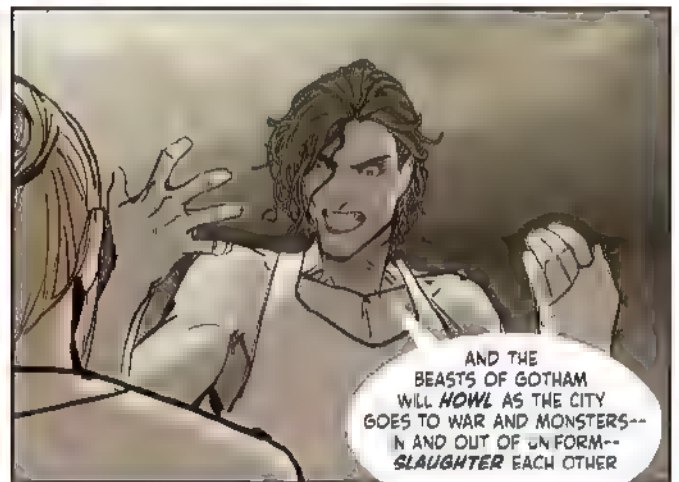
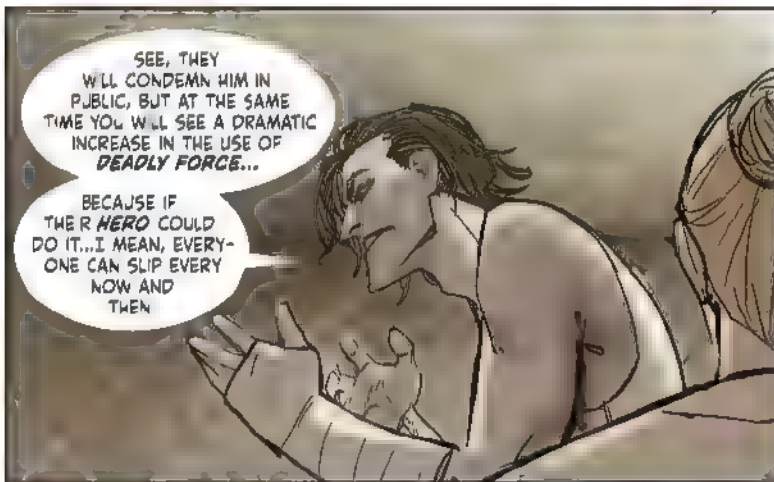
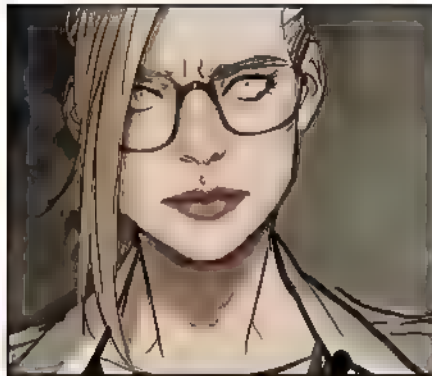
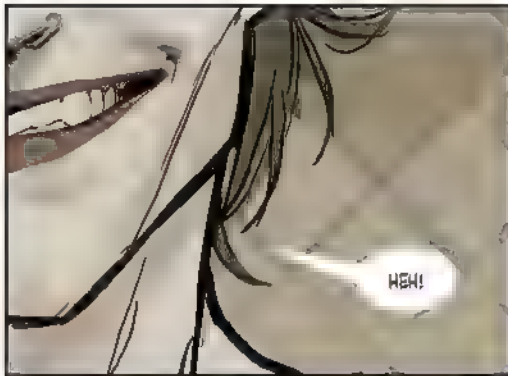
MR. JAY, I'M HERE TO CONTINUE OUR CONVERSATION.

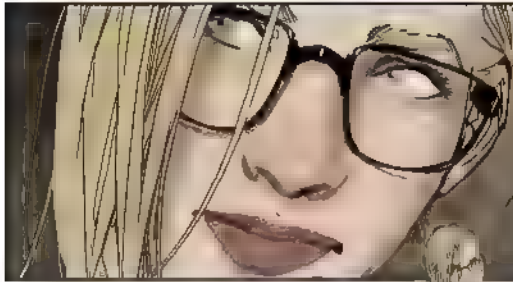
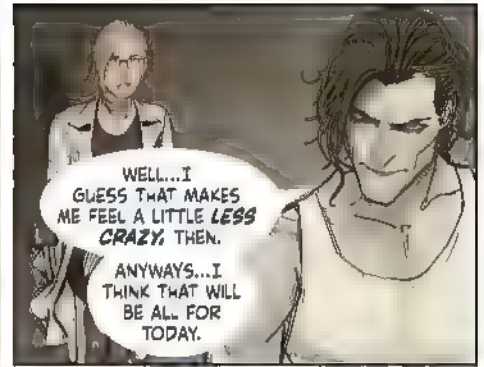
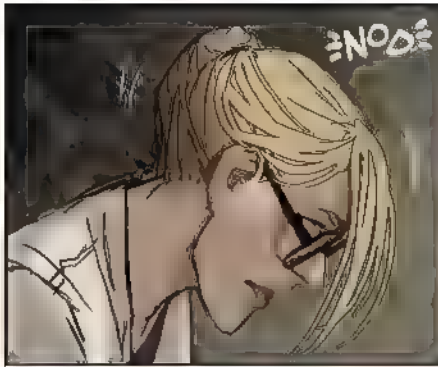
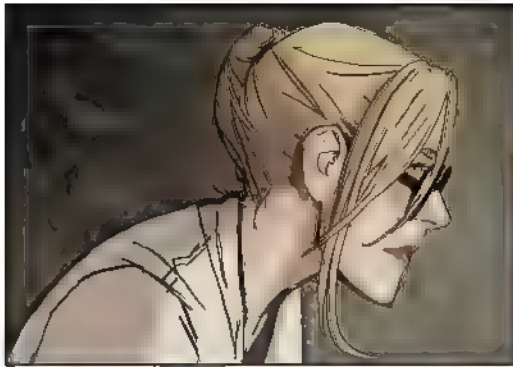
AH, DR. QUINN... SOMETHING?

IS QUINN OKAY? YOUR NAME IS A BIT OF A TONGLE TWISTER.

EH, I'VE HEARD WORSE. IT'S FINE.

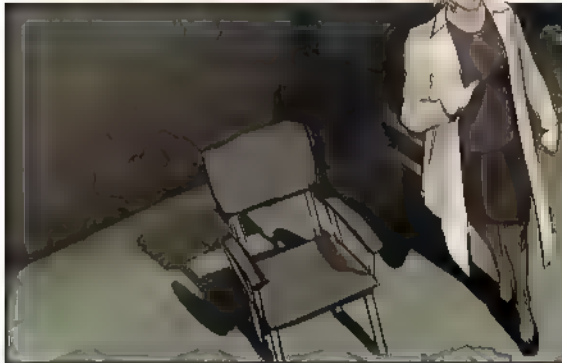






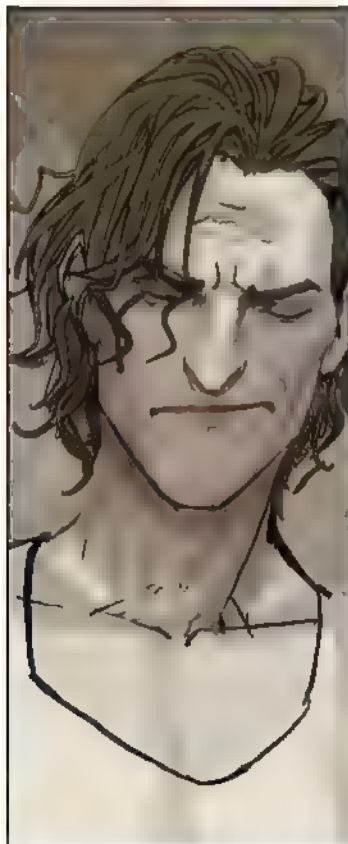
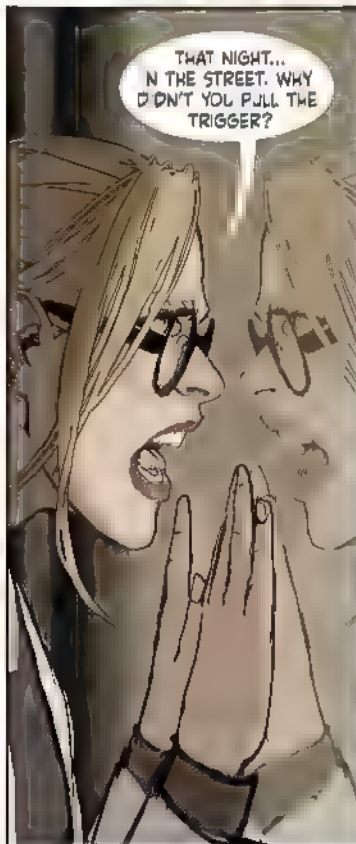
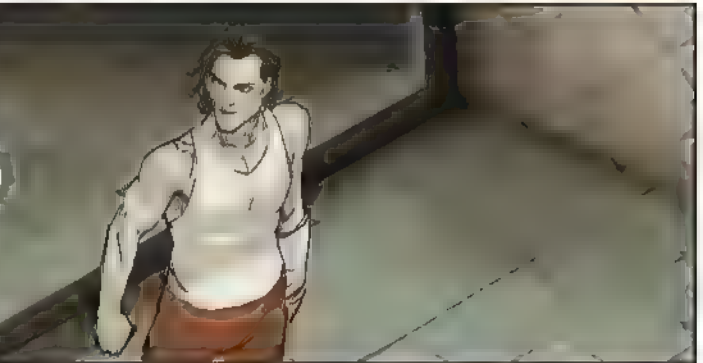
YOU THINK SOMEONE LIKE MR. FREEZE OR ZSASZ OR THE JOKER WOULD GIVE **YOU** A CHANCE IF YOU WERE ON THE BUSINESS END OF THEIR **WEAPON**?

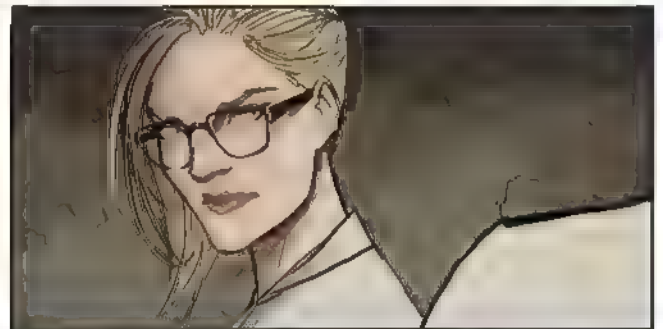
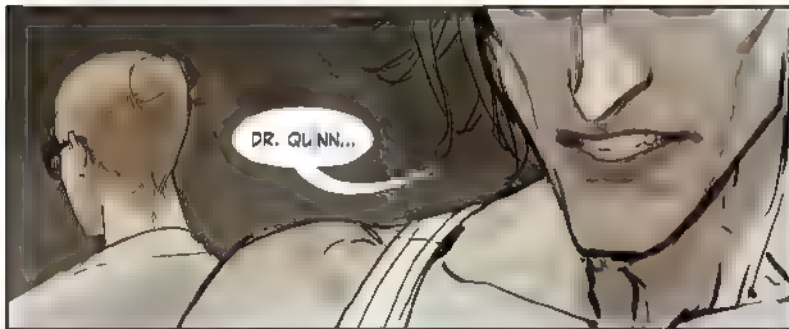
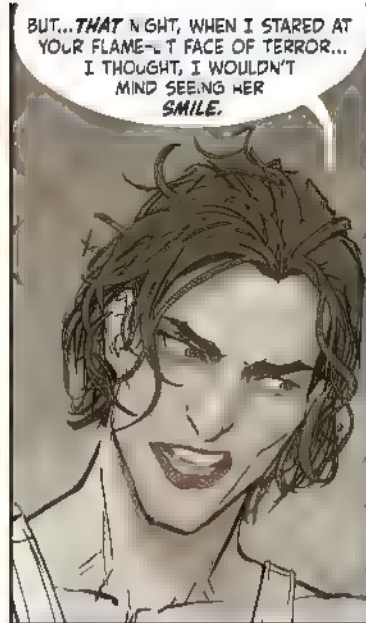
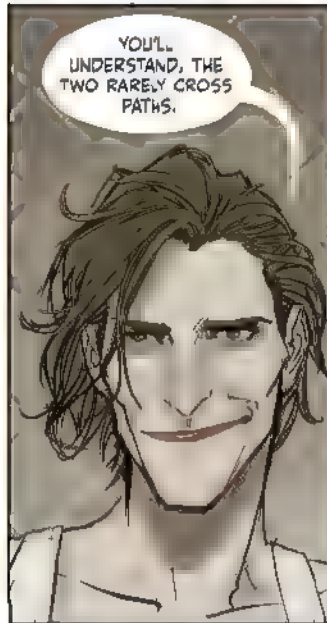
ALL OF THEM ARE RREDEEMABLE. MERCILESS **KILLERS** AND YOU **KNOW IT!**

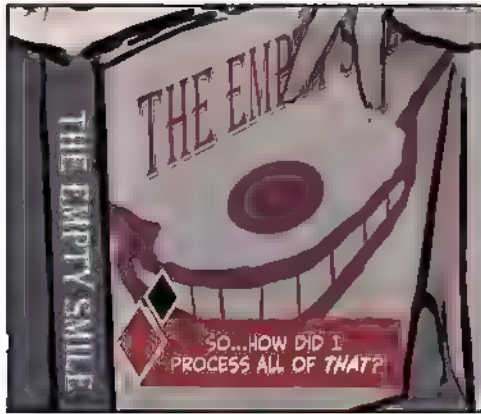


WAIT!

JUST ONE MORE QUESTION, MR. JAY!

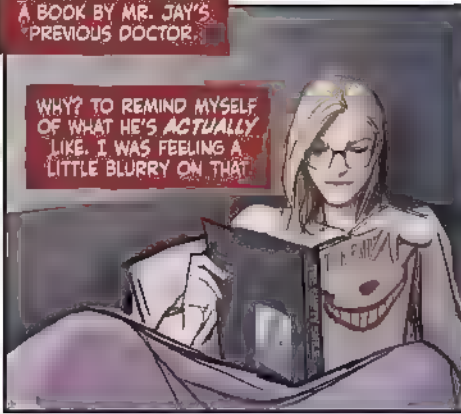




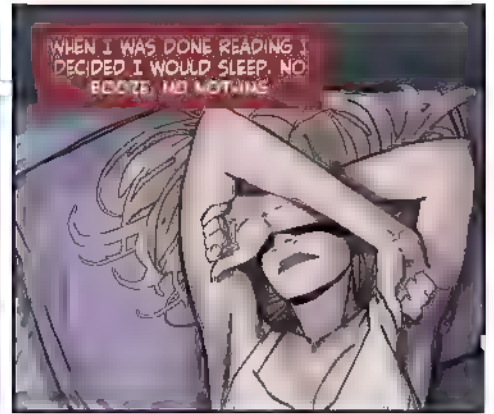


SO...HOW DID I
PROCESS ALL OF THAT?

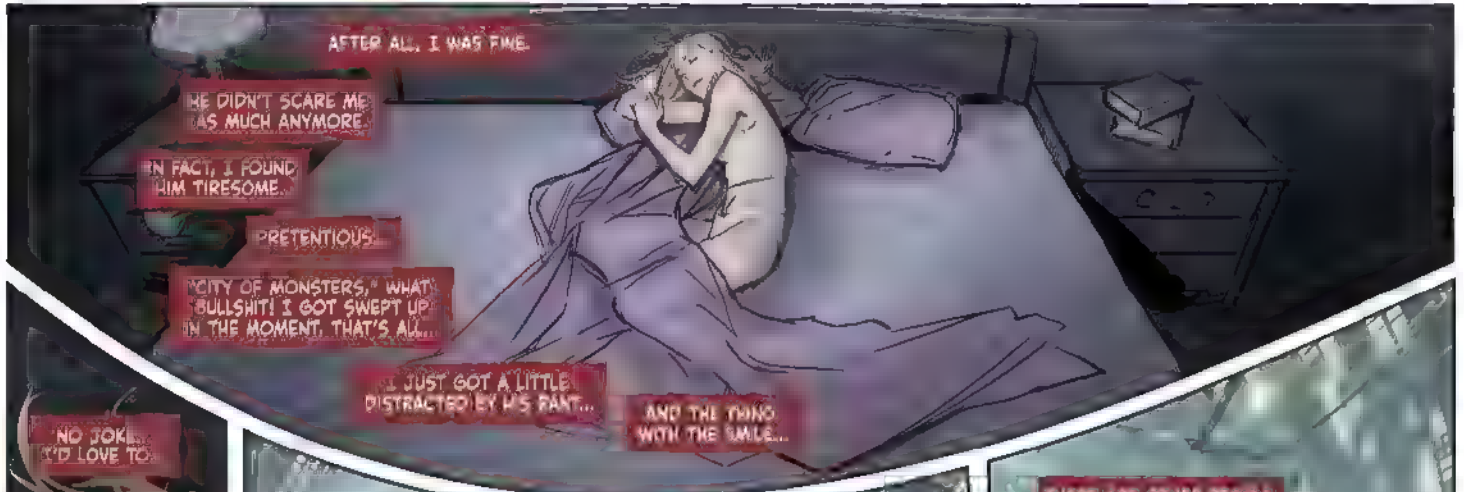
I DECIDED TO RE-READ
A BOOK BY MR. JAY'S
PREVIOUS DOCTOR.



WHY? TO REMIND MYSELF
OF WHAT HE'S ACTUALLY
LIKE. I WAS FEELING A
LITTLE BLURRY ON THAT.



WHEN I WAS DONE READING I
DECIDED I WOULD SLEEP. NO
BOOKS. NO NOTHING.



AFTER ALL, I WAS FINE.

HE DIDN'T SCARE ME
AS MUCH ANYMORE.

IN FACT, I FOUND
HIM TIRESOME...

PRETENTIOUS.

"CITY OF MONSTERS," WHAT
BULLSHIT! I GOT SWEEPED UP
IN THE MOMENT. THAT'S ALL...

I JUST GOT A LITTLE
DISTRACTED BY HIS PANT...

AND THE THING
WITH THE SMILE...



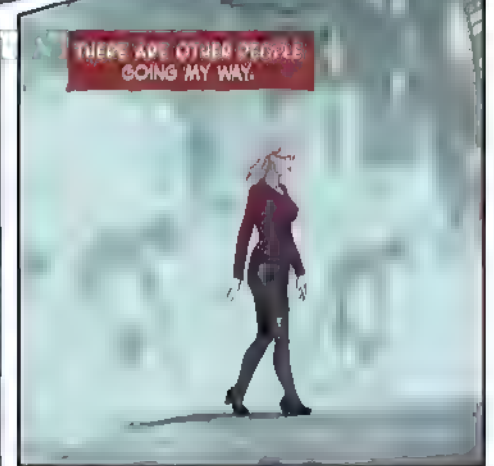
NO JOKE...
I'D LOVE TO.



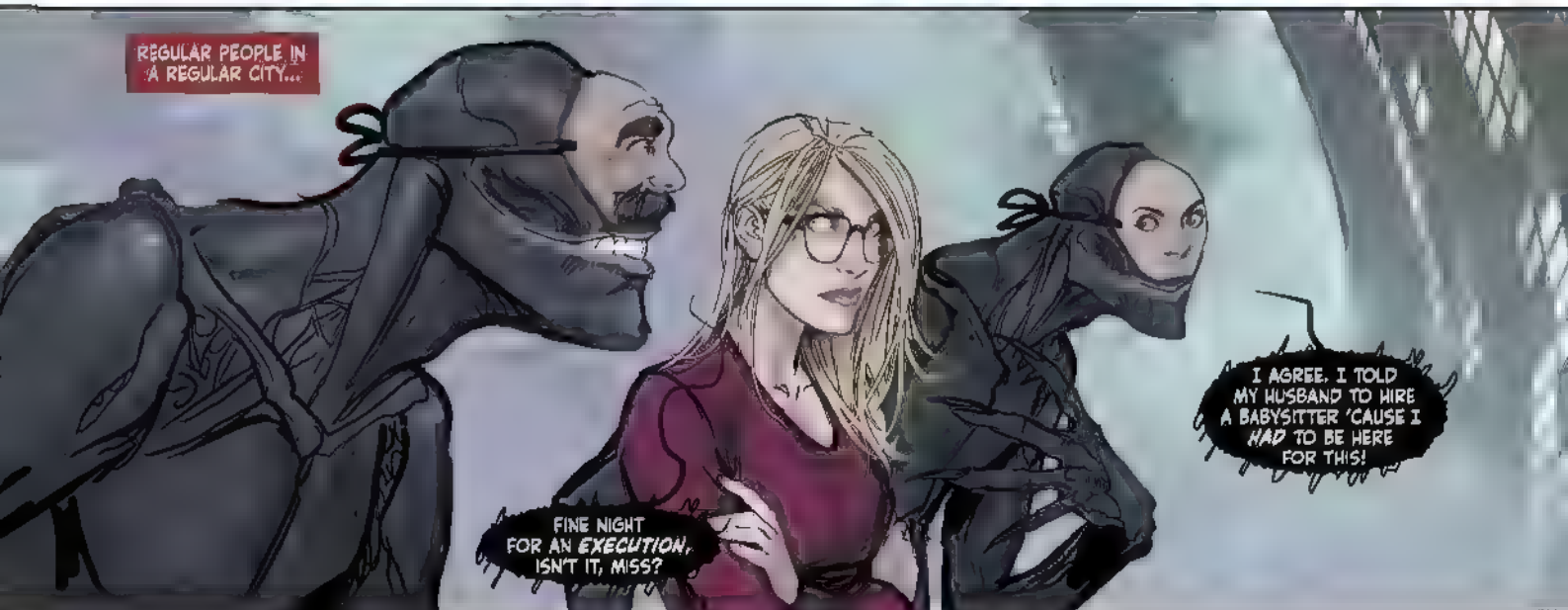
WHEN I FINALLY FALL
ASLEEP I DREAM OF
MYSELF WALKING.



AND I'M NOT ALONE.



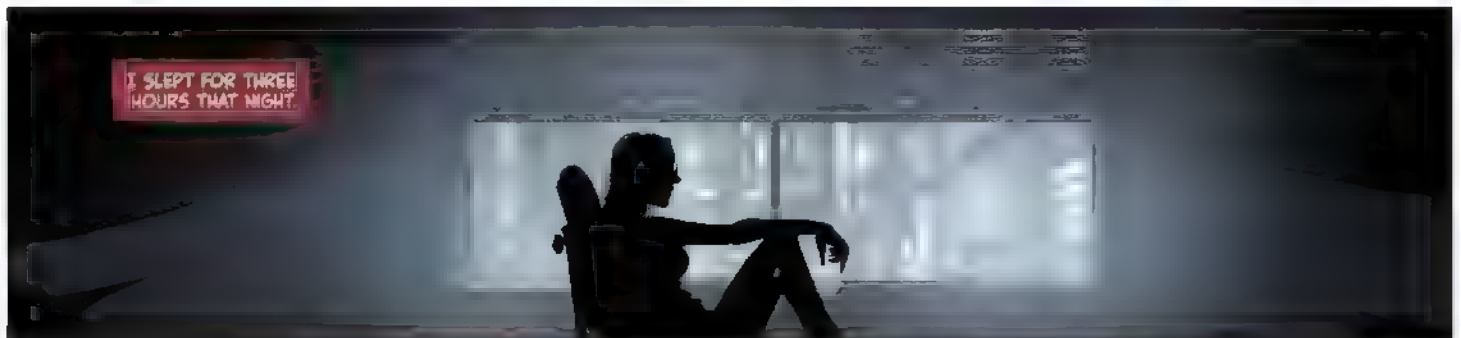
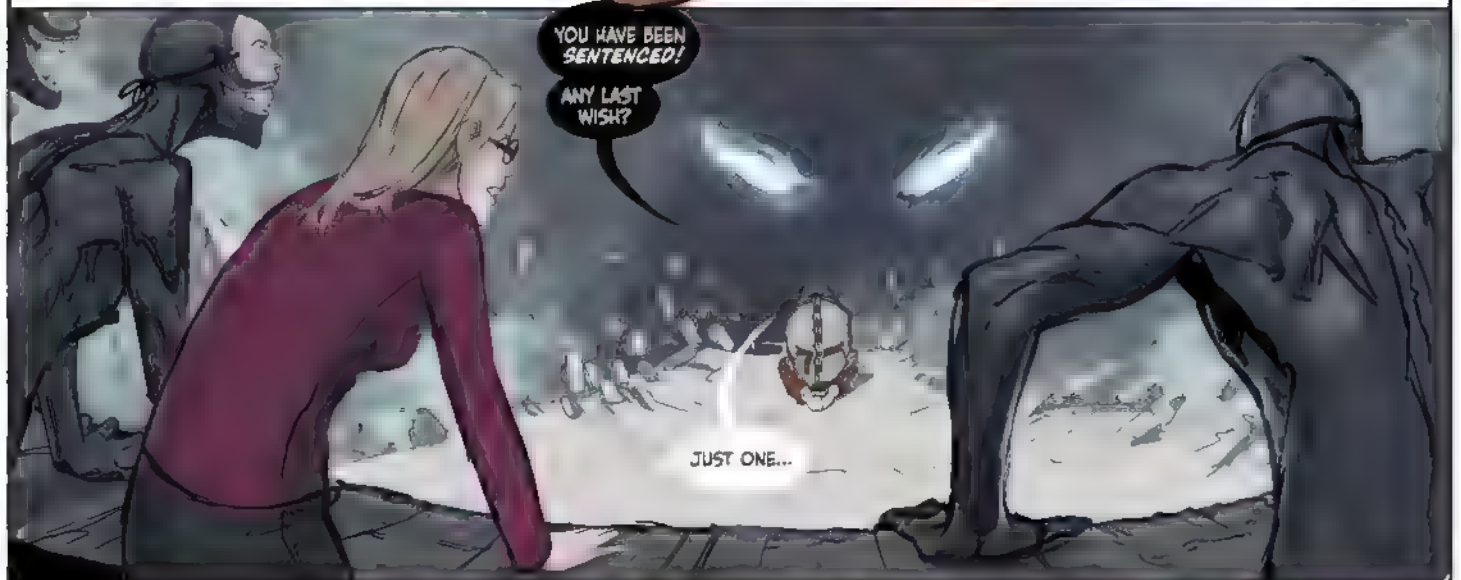
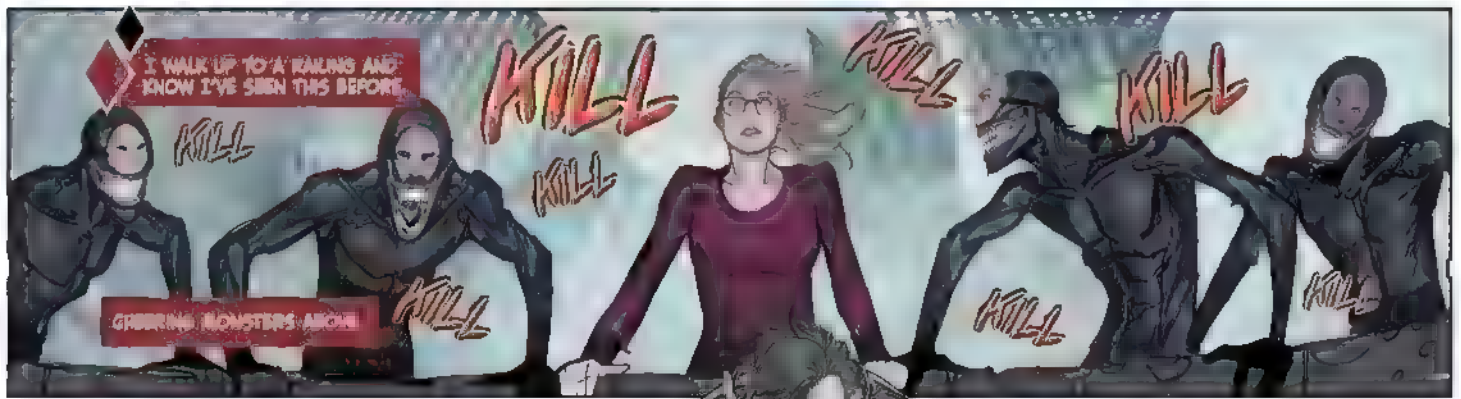
THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE
GOING MY WAY.



REGULAR PEOPLE IN
A REGULAR CITY...

FINE NIGHT
FOR AN EXECUTION.
ISN'T IT, MISS?

I AGREE. I TOLD
MY HUSBAND TO HIRE
A BABYSITTER 'CAUSE I
HAD TO BE HERE
FOR THIS!



LATER I'D LEARN I WASN'T THE ONLY ONE HAVING TROUBLE SLEEPING

SSSHHHHT

WELL WHAT DO YOU KNOW? MY PIZZA IS HERE!

LATE DELIVERY, AND I DO BELIEVE I ORDERED ANCHOVES WITH THIS!

GIVE ME A BREAK. YOU KNOW HOW HARD THIS WAS TO GET OUT OF DR. STRANGE'S OFFICE?

WELL, B+ FOR EFFORT.

I WANT DOUBLE THE MONEY!

YOU TELL THAT TO MY ASSOCIATES WHEN YOU GO TO COLLECT.

I'M SURE THEY'LL TAKE IT WELL.

YOU SON OF A BITCH. I'LL--

WHAT?

EXACTLY!

YOU REALLY SHOULD SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP FOR THAT GAMBLING ADDICTION OF YOURS, MR. ROBBINS.

I MEAN, YOU ARE IN THE RIGHT PLACE FOR THAT. THEY CARE HERE.

OH YES, THEY CARE A LOT...

FOUR DAYS PASSED AND THINGS GOT PROGRESSIVELY WORSE.

THIS WORDS ECHOED IN MY MIND, MAKING ME FEEL OVERLY CONSCIOUS OF EVERY SMILE I MADE.

HERE YOU GO, MISS.

THANK YOU.

I SPENT MOST OF MY FREE TIME WATCHING THE NEWS. NOTHING TO SMILE ABOUT THERE.

...GOTHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT IS TORN APART FROM WITHIN AS ALL EFFORTS ARE FOCUSED ON IDENTIFYING THE REMAINING EXECUTIVES ON THE FORCE.

IN RELATED NEWS, BODIES OF SIX GANG MEMBERS WERE FOUND...

ON THE FIFTH DAY, MY MIND TURNED SADISTIC.

A GOOD HAIR MOMENT SPARKED A SECOND OF UNRESTRAINED VANITY. I SMILED TO THE MIRROR AND A THOUGHT FORMED FASTER THAN I COULD STOP IT.

LIKE A BIT OF GALLS HUMOR THAT HITS YOU DURING A FUNERAL, IT CAME...UNWANTED, YET...RELENTLESS.

HE COULDN'T PULL THE TRIGGER BECAUSE I WAS TOO BEAUTIFUL TO DIE.

I SPENT THE REST OF THE DAY FEELING DISGUSTED WITH MYSELF FOR LETTING SUCH A THOUGHT EVEN ENTER MY MIND.

LITTLE DID I KNOW IT WAS FAR FROM OVER.

HE HAD STOLEN MY NIGHTS...

...MY DAYS...

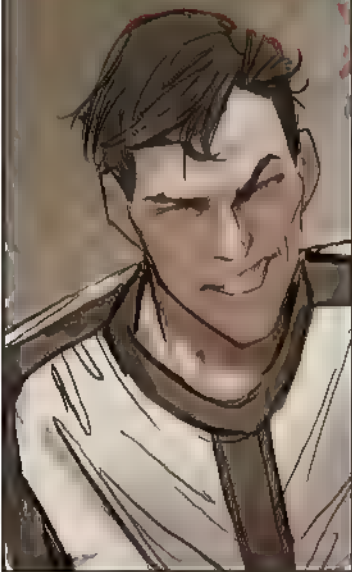
AND MY SMILE.

NEXT...

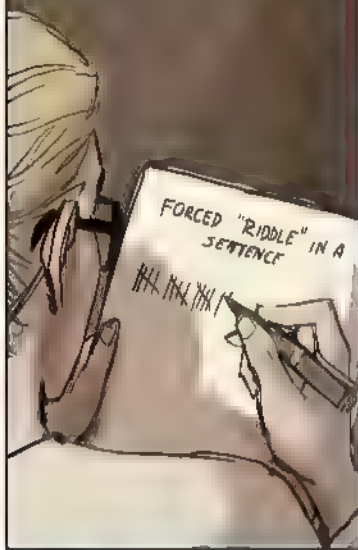
NEXT WOULD BE MY HEART.

I DECIDED TO AVOID HIM FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS. SEE IF THAT WOULD HELP.

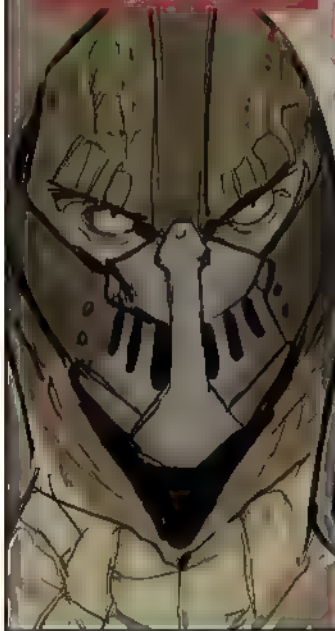
IT DIDN'T. FOR THE DURATION OF THOSE TWO WEEKS, I FOUND MYSELF UNFOCUSED, MY MIND WANDERING BACK TO THAT MOMENT AND THE SOUND OF HIS VOICE.



TO ESCAPE THOSE THOUGHTS, INSTEAD OF BEING PRODUCTIVE I TURNED TO THE TRIVIAL.



IN MY EXHAUSTED STATE I COMMITTED THE CARDINAL SIN OF THERAPY... I STOPPED LISTENING.



I GREW CYNICAL. MY SESSIONS WERE JUST EMPTY, USELESS RANTS FROM BOTH EGOMANIACS AND JUST PLAIN MANIACS.



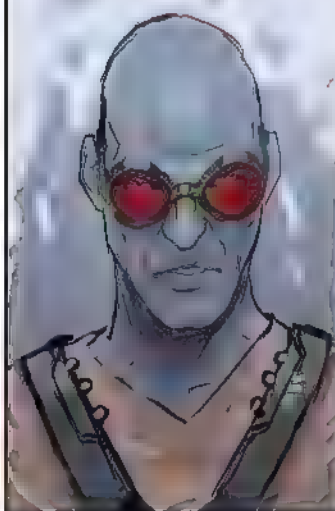
AND IT ALL TASTES LIKE CHICKEN, YOU KNOW?



I RETREATED MORE AND MORE, JUST TUNING OUT...



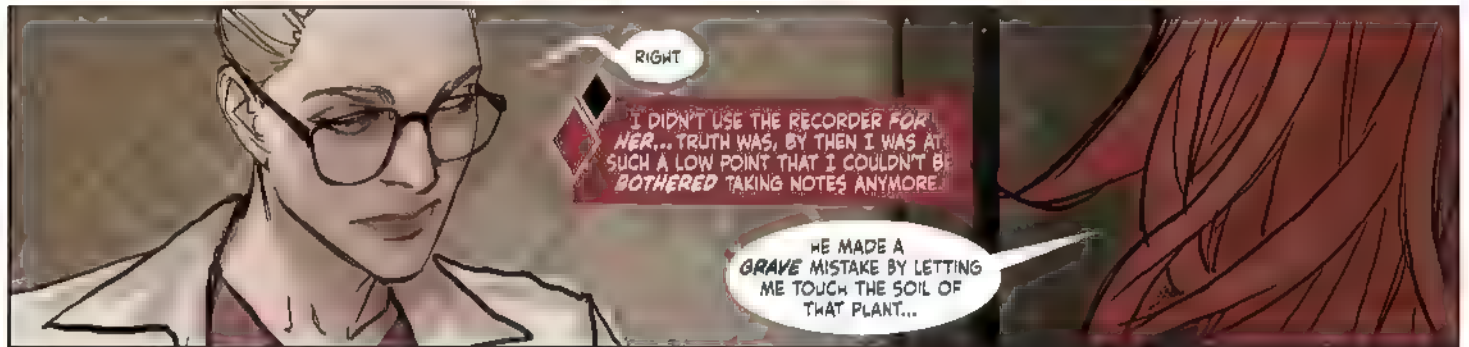
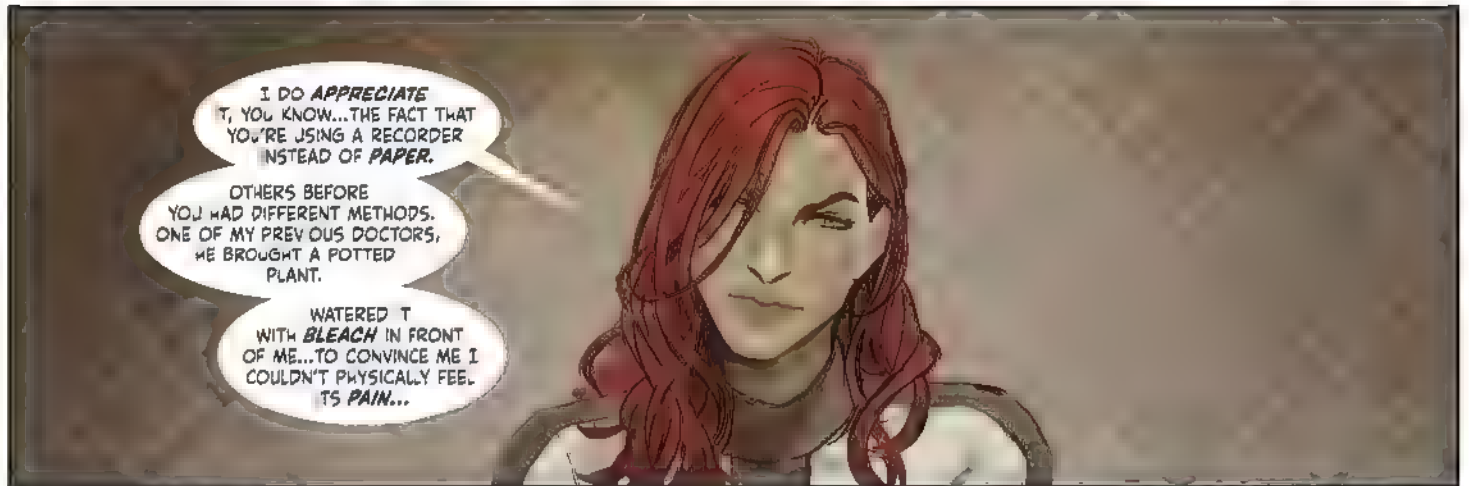
I QUESTIONED MY THEORY, MY IDEAS, MY WILL TO CONTINUE.



AND ALL THAT TIME, MY MIND JUST KEPT GOING BACK TO HIM...



"NO JOKE... I'D LOVE TO SEE YOU SMILE ONE DAY..."





WHA--WHAT?

YOUR
HORMONES ARE
ELEVATED...EVERY TIME
YOU SMILE, YOU
BLUSH...

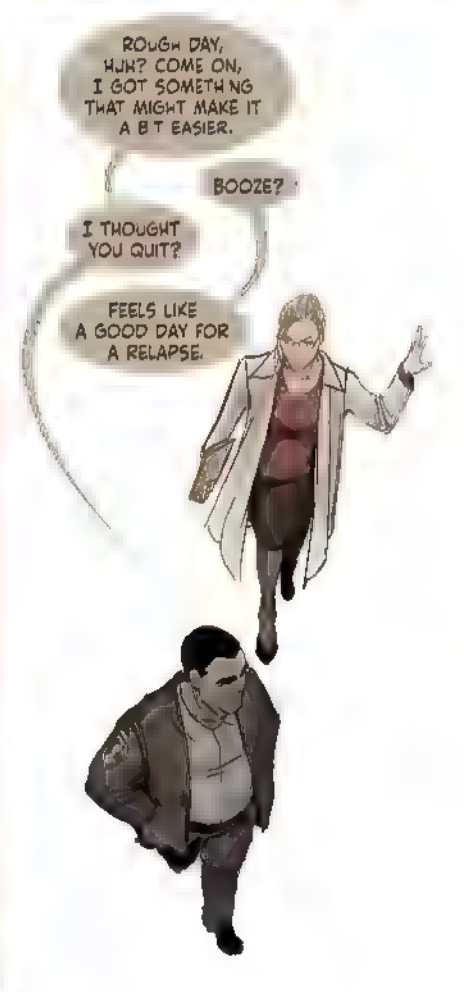
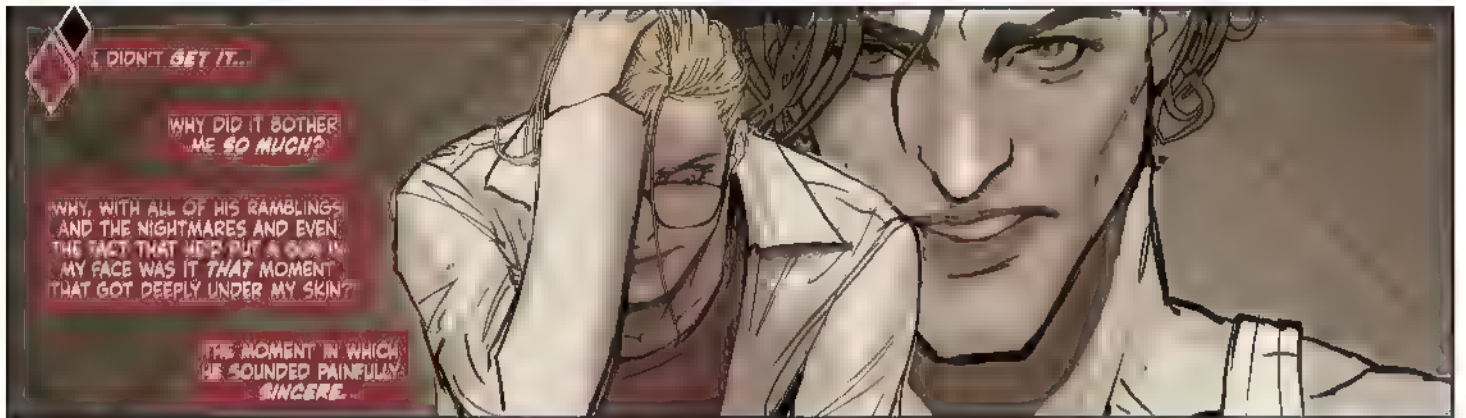
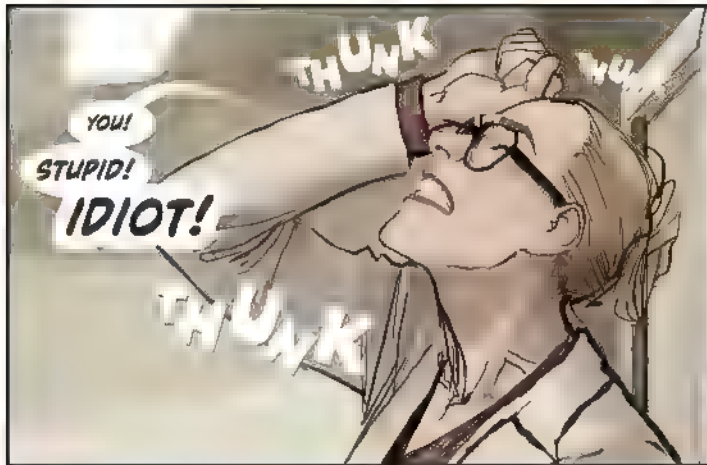
USUALLY I
HAVE TO *KISS* A PERSON
TO ELICIT SUCH A RESPONSE...
SO I'M WONDERING WHETHER
MY ABILITIES HAVE...
EVOLVED.

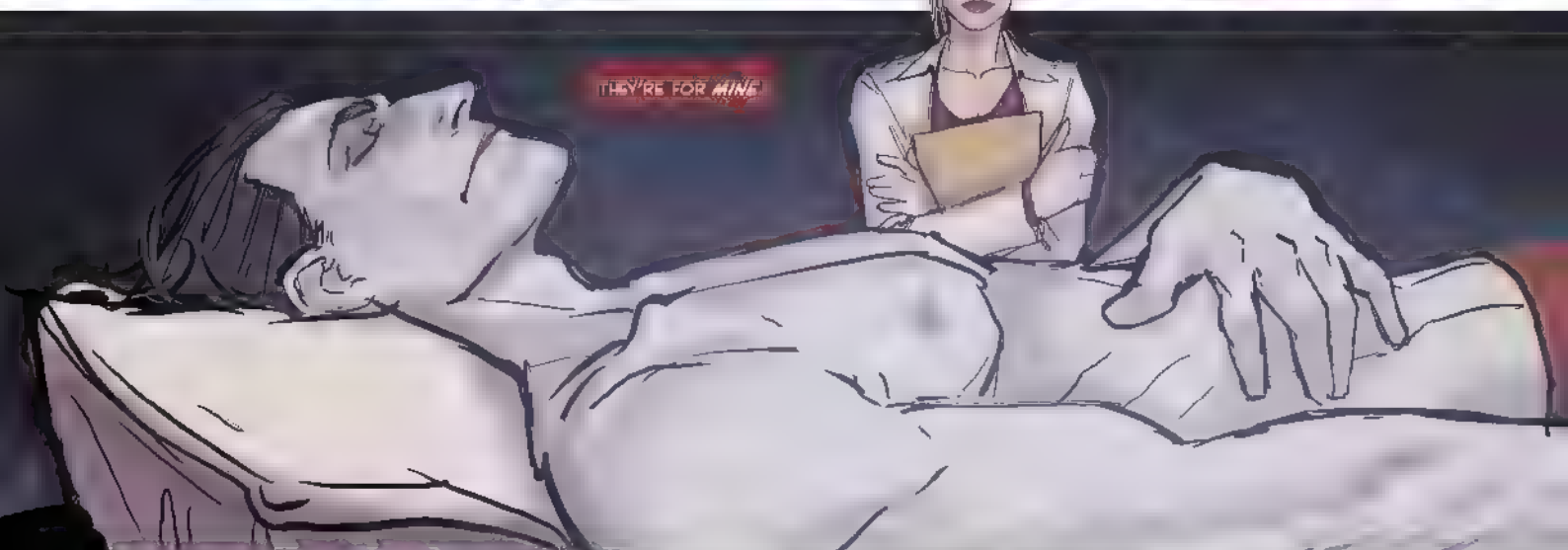
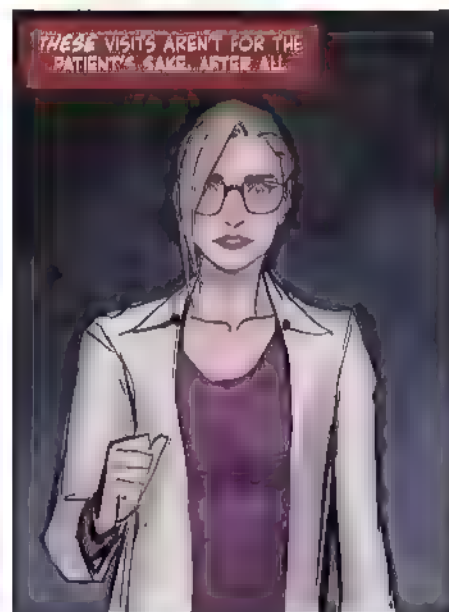
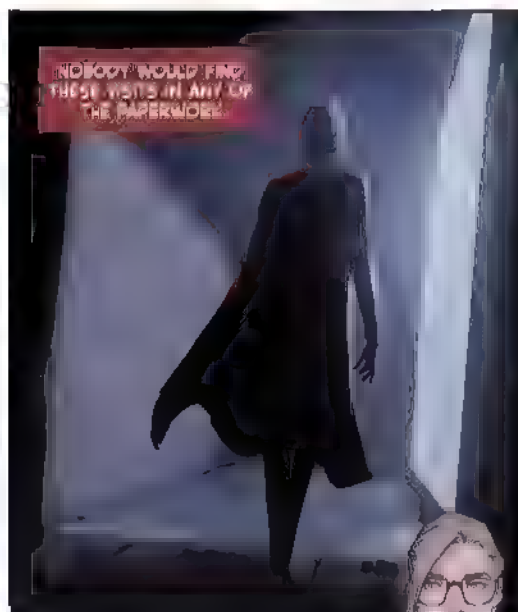
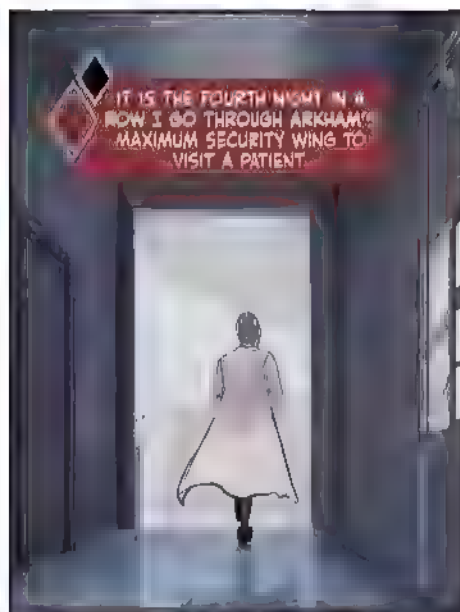
JH...NO...

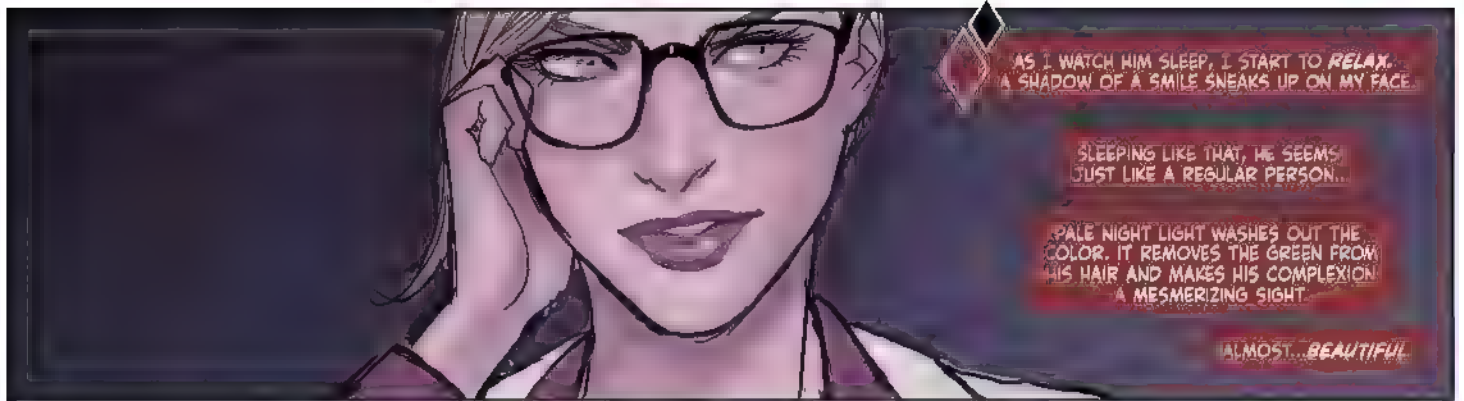
UM, I THINK
WE'RE DONE HERE
FOR TODAY.

THANK
YOU, MS.
ISLEY.

IT'S IVY!







AS I WATCH HIM SLEEP, I START TO RELAX.
A SHADOW OF A SMILE SNEAKS UP ON MY FACE.

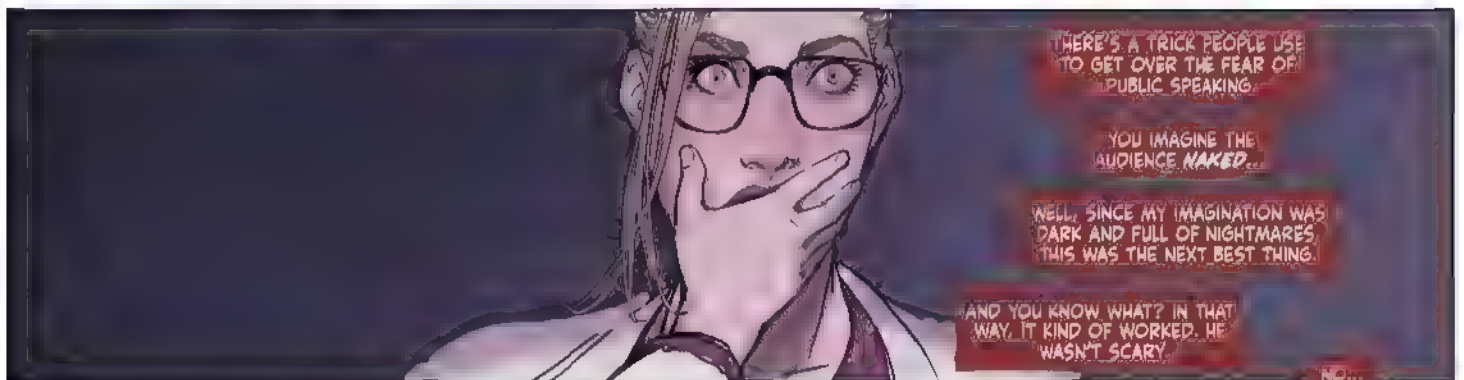
SLEEPING LIKE THAT, HE SEEMS
JUST LIKE A REGULAR PERSON...

PALE NIGHT LIGHT WASHES OUT THE
COLOR. IT REMOVES THE GREEN FROM
HIS HAIR AND MAKES HIS COMPLEXION
A MESMERIZING SIGHT.

ALMOST... BEAUTIFUL.



THIS IS MY OWN SECRET THERAPY.
A WAY TO BEAT THE FEAR.



THERE'S A TRICK PEOPLE USE
TO GET OVER THE FEAR OF
PUBLIC SPEAKING.

YOU IMAGINE THE
AUDIENCE NAKED...

WELL, SINCE MY IMAGINATION WAS
DARK AND FULL OF NIGHTMARES,
THIS WAS THE NEXT BEST THING.

AND YOU KNOW WHAT? IN THAT
WAY, IT KIND OF WORKED. HE
WASN'T SCARY.

NO...



NOT SCARY...

...JUST...

..SCARRED!

AS I WATCHED ONE SCARRED MAN SLEEP, SOMEWHERE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF GOTHAM, IN ANOTHER KIND OF HOSPITAL, ANOTHER SCARRED MAN WAS JUST WAKING UP.

WH...

NGH...
WHAT...

WHAT'S
WRONG WITH
MY EYE?

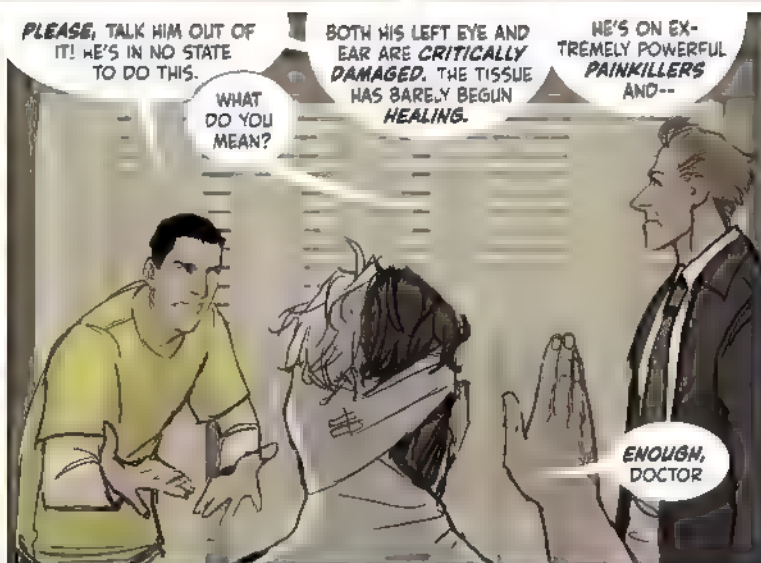
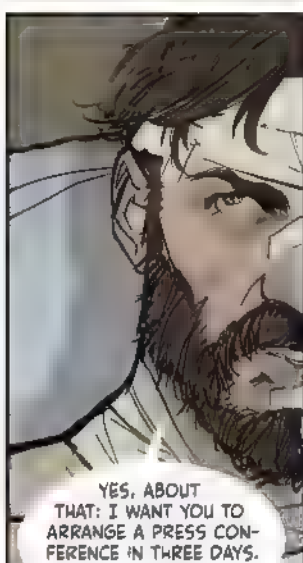
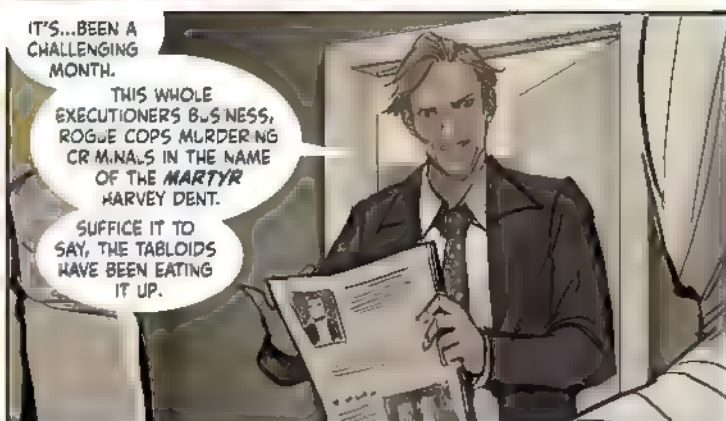
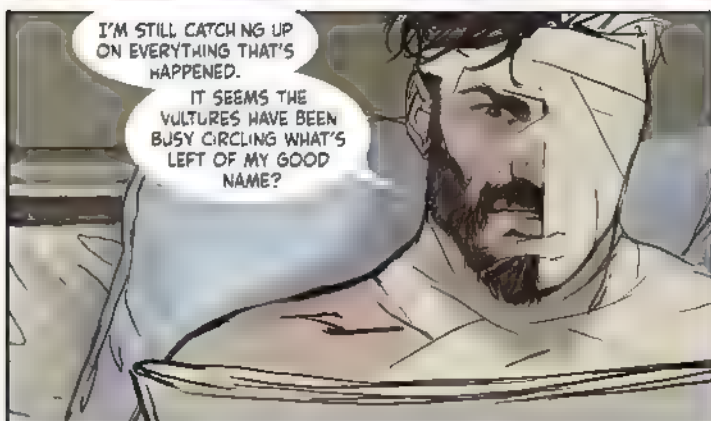
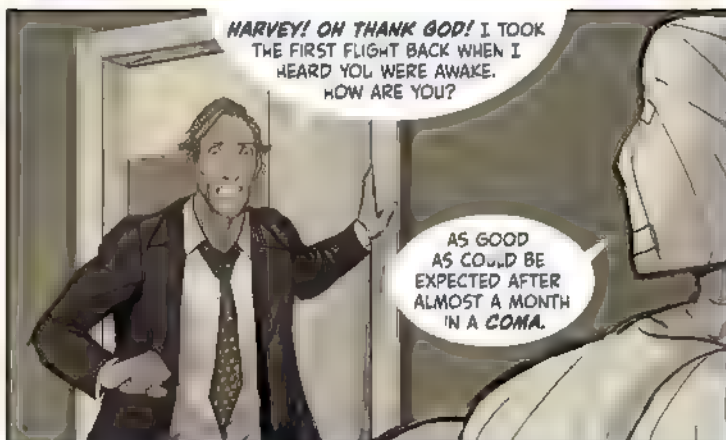
CALM DOWN,
MR. DENTI WE'LL
COVER IT R GHT
NOW.

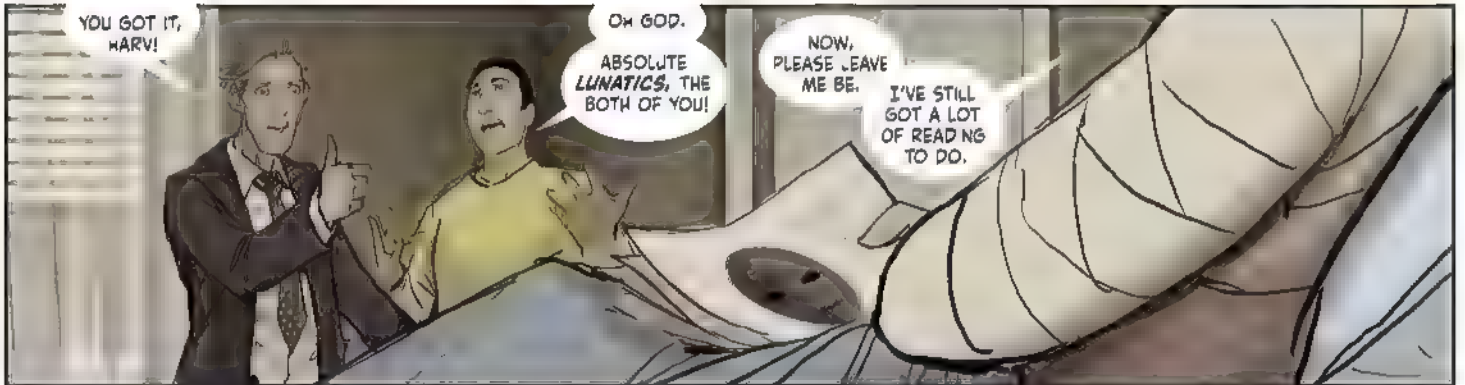
JUST RELAX!

WUH-
WHERE
AM I?

GOTHAM GENERAL.
YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH
A ROUGH FEW WEEKS,
MR. D STRICT
ATTORNEY...



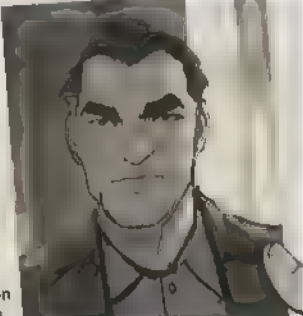


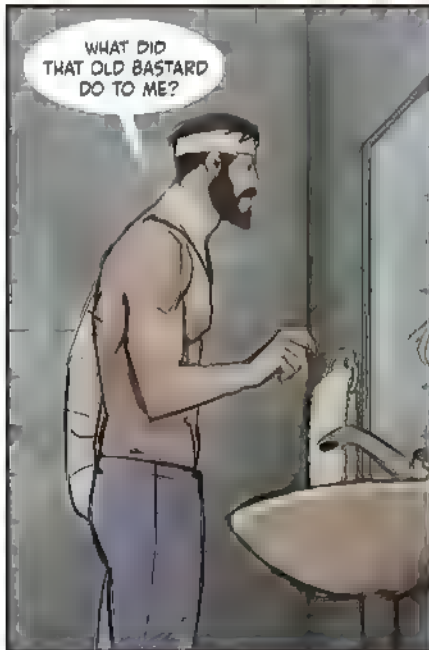


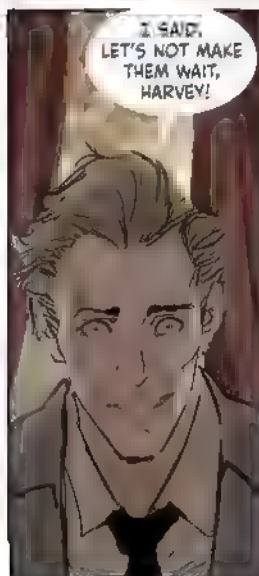
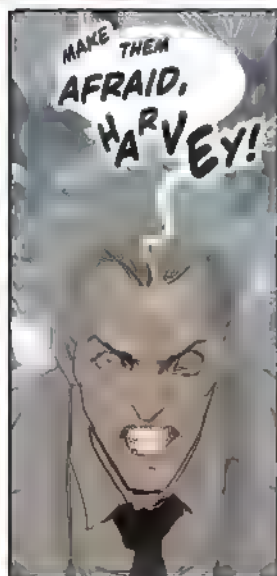
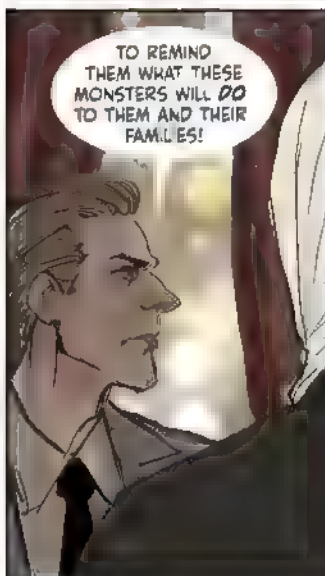
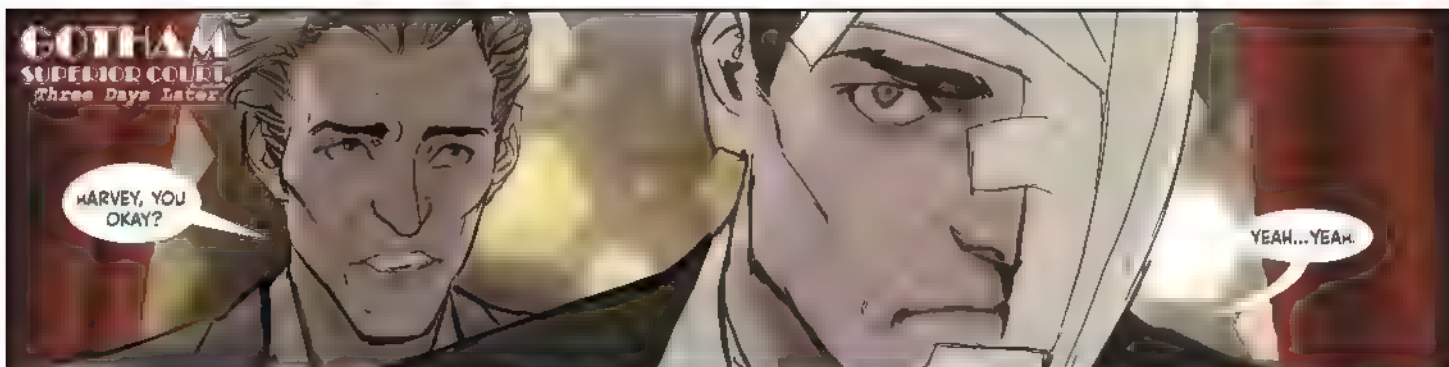
Salvatore "Sal" Maroni Executed

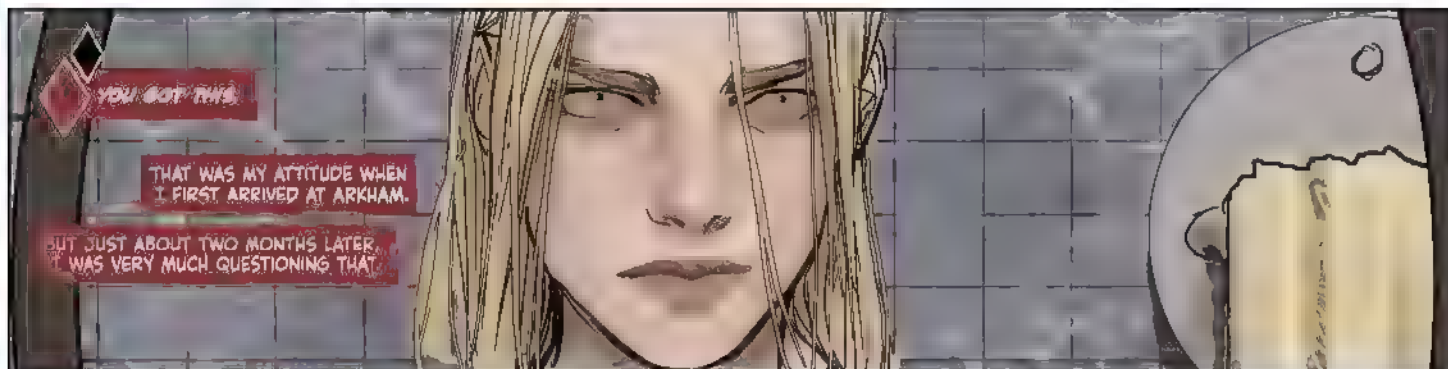
Following the attack on district attorney Harvey Dent, notorious construction mogul and suspected crime boss Salvatore Maroni met his end by the hand of the so-called Executioners. The vehicle transporting Mr. Maroni to the county jail was commandeered by the Executioners not long after its departure and from there on nobody knew of its whereabouts.

The autopsy concluded that Mr. Maroni was savagely beaten for an extended period of time resulting in as many as seventeen broken bones. His life and was televised after a tape was made of the execution.





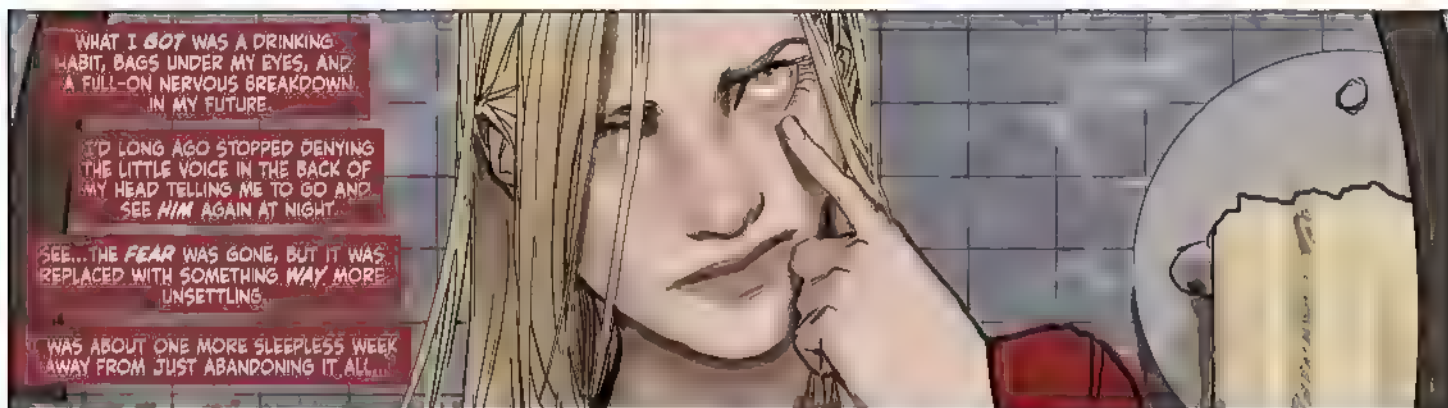




YOU GOT THIS.

THAT WAS MY ATTITUDE WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED AT ARKHAM.

BUT JUST ABOUT TWO MONTHS LATER, I WAS VERY MUCH QUESTIONING THAT.

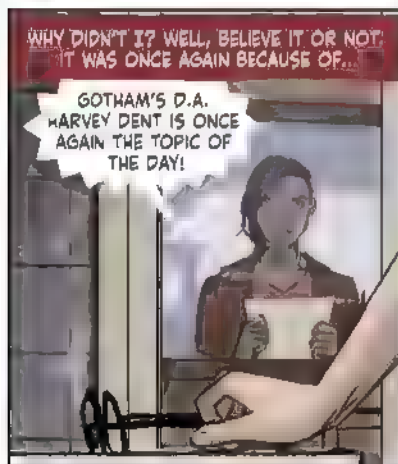


WHAT I GOT WAS A DRINKING HABIT, BAGS UNDER MY EYES, AND A FULL-ON NERVOUS BREAKDOWN IN MY FUTURE.

I'D LONG AGO STOPPED DENYING THE LITTLE VOICE IN THE BACK OF MY HEAD TELLING ME TO GO AND SEE HIM AGAIN AT NIGHT.

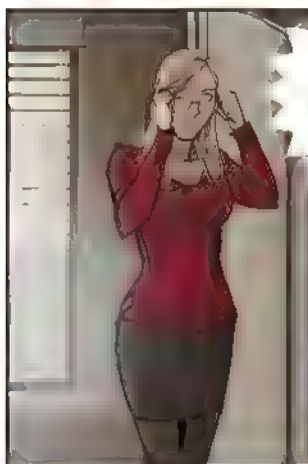
SEE... THE FEAR WAS GONE, BUT IT WAS REPLACED WITH SOMETHING WAY MORE UNSETTLING.

IT WAS ABOUT ONE MORE SLEEPLESS WEEK AWAY FROM JUST ABANDONING IT ALL.



WHY DIDN'T IT? WELL, BELIEVE IT OR NOT, IT WAS ONCE AGAIN BECAUSE OF...

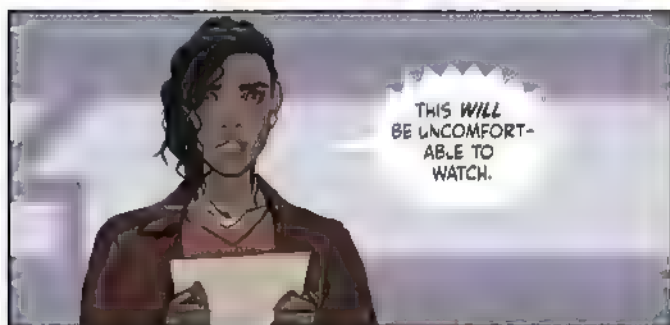
GOTHAM'S D.A. HARVEY DENT IS ONCE AGAIN THE TOPIC OF THE DAY!



THIS AFTERNOON MR. DENT GAVE HIS FIRST PRESS CONFERENCE SINCE THE HORRIFIC ATTACK ON HIS PERSON LAST MONTH, AND THE SCENE OUTSIDE GOTHAM SUPERIOR COURT TURNED TO PANDEMONIUM.

WE WILL NOW SHOW YOU THE RECORDING OF THIS EVENT.

BUT BE WARNED: YOU'LL WANT TO KEEP YOUR CHILDREN AWAY FROM THE TV FOR THE NEXT FEW MINUTES.



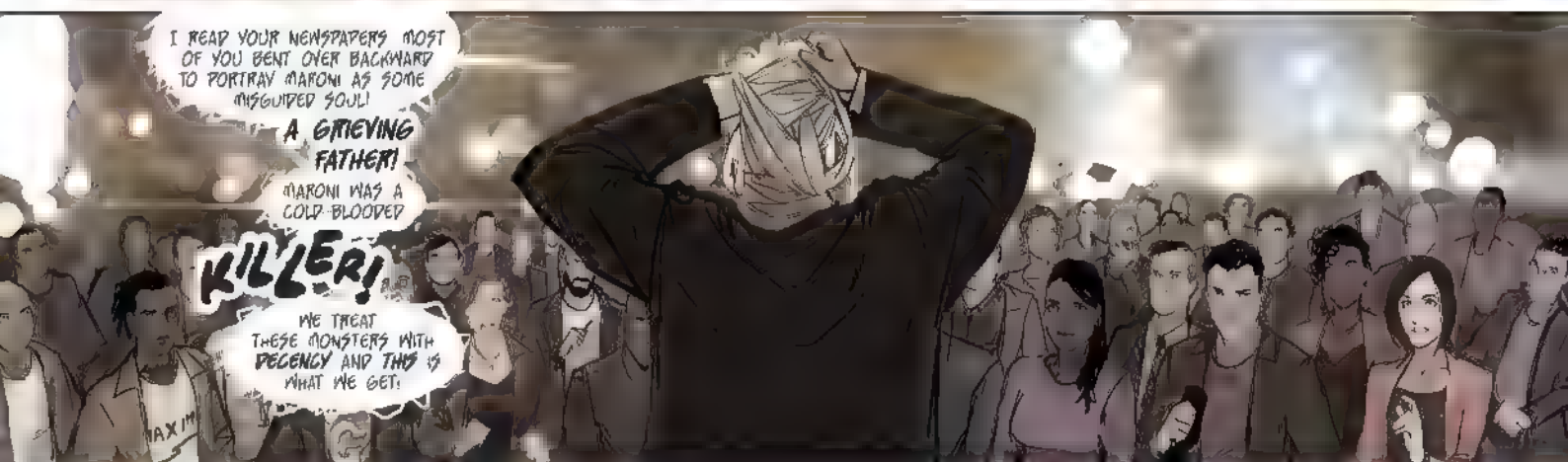
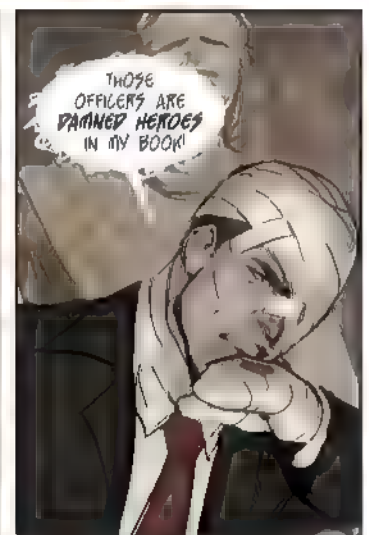
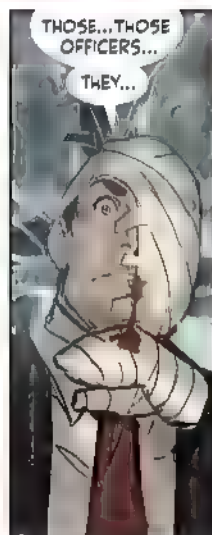
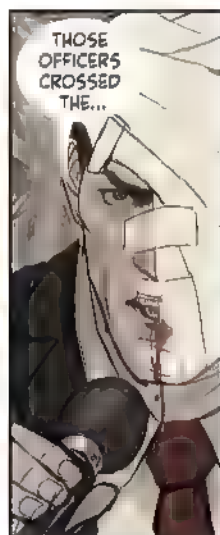
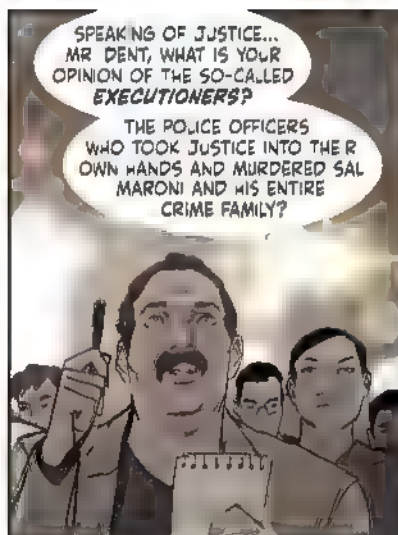
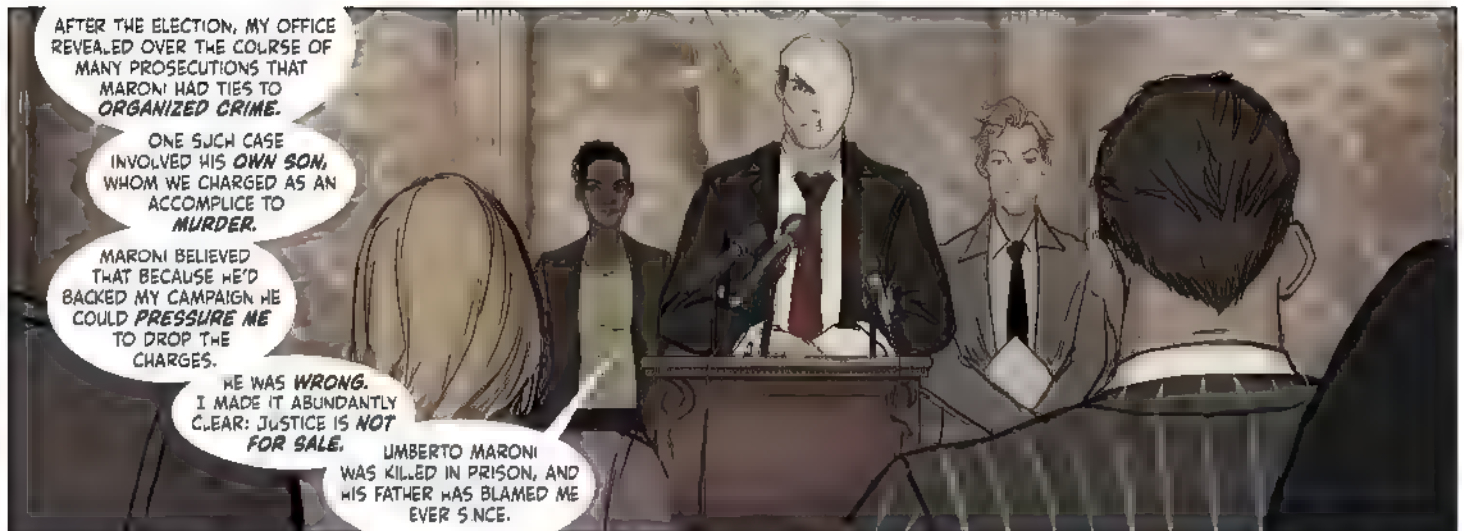
THIS WILL BE UNCOMFORTABLE TO WATCH.




MR. DENT! WHY DID THE LATE CRIME BOSS SALVATORE MARON TRY TO KILL YOU?

SAL MARONI INITIALLY APPROACHED ME AS A BUSINESSMAN WANTING TO SUPPORT MY CAMPAIGN FOR DISTRICT ATTORNEY. I ACCEPTED HIS HELP.

HE SEEMED SINCERE, AND I HAD NO REASON TO DOUBT HIS INTENTIONS.





I AM A
GOD-FEARING MAN
BUT IF WE KEEP TURNING
THE OTHER CHEEK WE'LL
RUN OUT OF CHEEKS!

THE EXECUTIONERS
CRUSHED THOSE ROACHES
THE WAY FECKLESS
POLITICIANS NEVER
COULD!

THE WAY
THAT NOT EVEN
THE BATMAN
COULD!

AND EVEN
THOUGH NONE OF
YOU WILL ADMIT IT,
YOU KNOW I'M
RIGHT!

THERE IS
A CANCER IN
GOTHAM, AND THE
ONLY WAY TO CURE
IT IS BY CARRYING
IT OUT!



THERE IS NO
RECOVERY AND NO
REHABILITATION FOR
THESE PREDATORS!

DO YOU
HONESTLY THINK
THEY CAN
CHANGE?

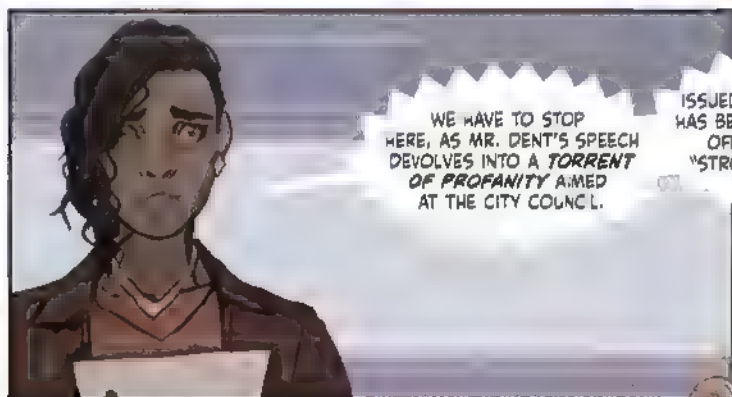
ARE YOU THAT
DELUSIONAL?

KILLER CROC?
FREEZER POISON
IYI? JOKER?

YOU
REALLY THINK
THEY CAN BE
HELPED?

THEY ARE
REMORSELESS,
COLD,
UNCARING...

MONSTERS.



WE HAVE TO STOP
HERE, AS MR. DENT'S SPEECH
DEVOLVES INTO A **TORRENT
OF PROFANITY** AIMED
AT THE CITY COUNCIL.



CITY HALL SUBSEQUENTLY
ISSUED A STATEMENT SAYING HARVEY DENT
HAS BEEN TEMPORARILY REMOVED FROM THE
OFFICE OF DISTRICT ATTORNEY, CITING
"STRONG PAIN MEDICATION" AS THE CAUSE
OF HIS STUNNING OUTBURST--



A MONTH AGO I WOULD HAVE BEEN OUTRAGED.
I WOULD HAVE YELLED AT THE TELEVISION, FOR
ALL THE GOOD THAT WOULD HAVE DONE.
BUT NOT THAT DAY.

THAT DAY I WAS **TIRED**. TIRED ENOUGH TO
STOP CARING. TIRED ENOUGH FOR DENT'S
SERMON OF FEAR TO MAKE **SENSE** TO ME.

TIRED OF...EVERYTHING.

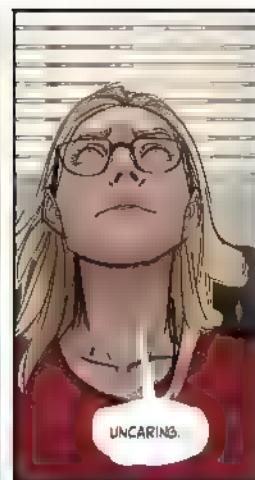
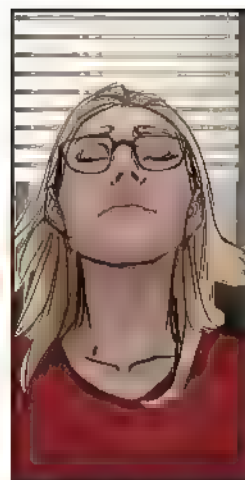


TIRED OF ARKHAM.

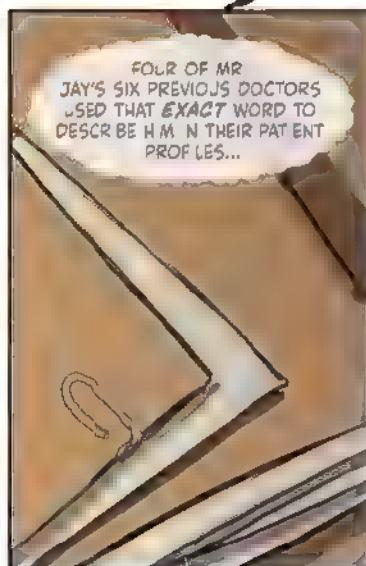
TIRED OF HIM.

MY GREAT TORMENTOR.
WHY WOULD I EVER WANT
TO DEAL WITH HIM AGAIN?

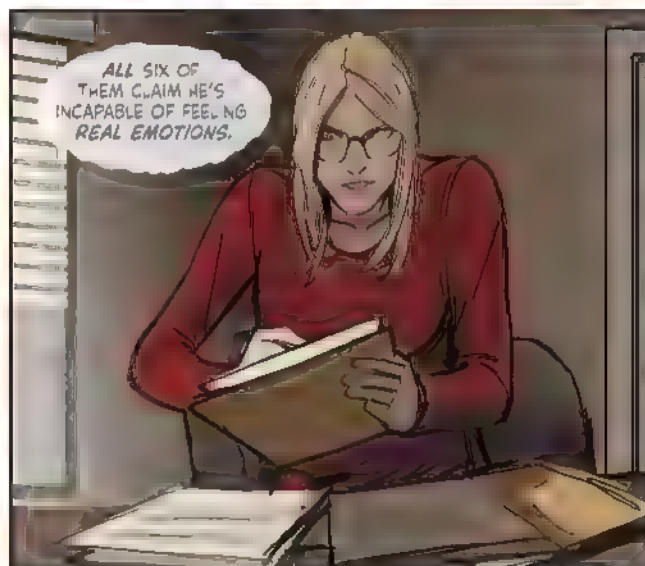
WHAT WAS IT DENT CALLED HIM?
REMORSELESS, COLD, UNCARING.



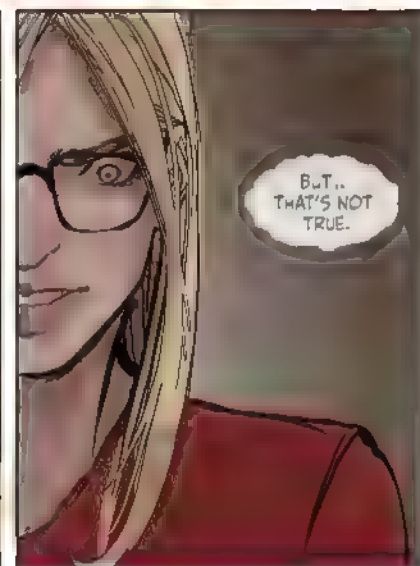
UNCARING.



FOUR OF MR
JAY'S SIX PREVIOUS DOCTORS
USED THAT *EXACT* WORD TO
DESCRIBE HIM IN THEIR PATIENT
PROFILES...



ALL SIX OF
THEM CLAIM HE'S
INCAPABLE OF FEELING
REAL EMOTIONS.



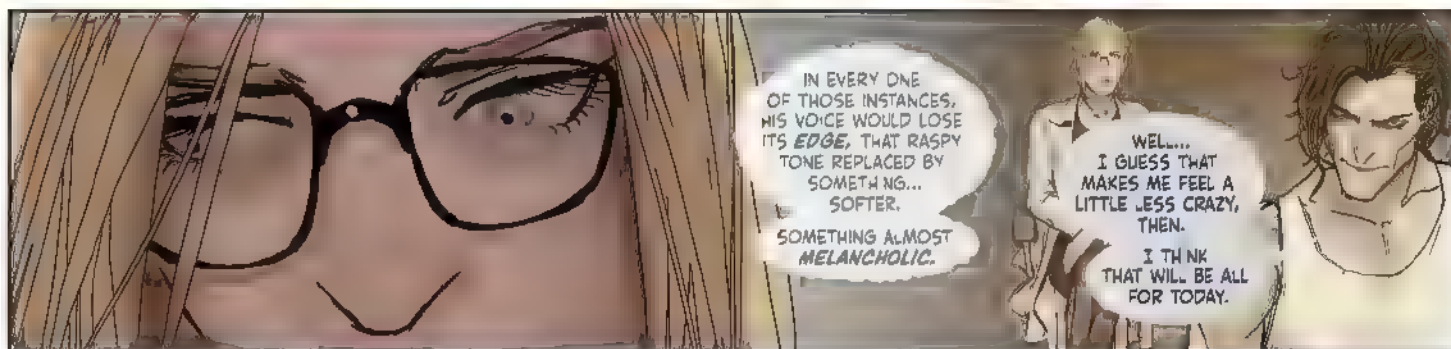
BUT..
THAT'S NOT
TRUE.



AND WHAT
DO YOU DREAM
OF?

I'VE SEEN IT.
SURE, IT HAPPENED RARELY,
BUT EVERY NOW AND THEN HIS
MASK WOULD SLIP FOR
A MOMENT...

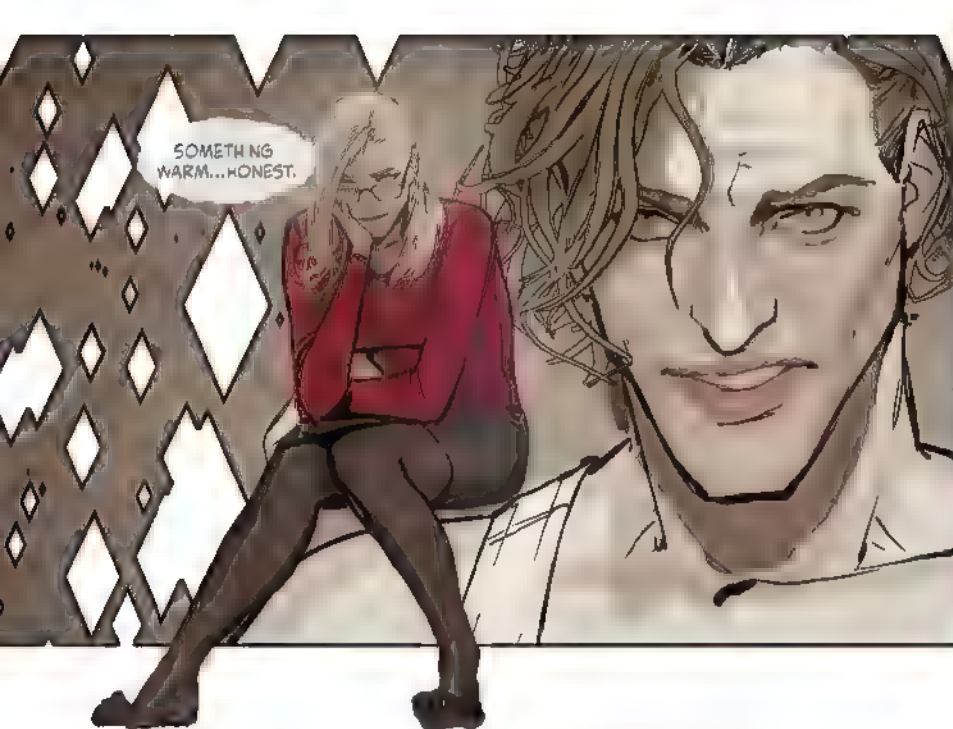
OH... SIMPLE
STUFF... HONEST
SMILES...



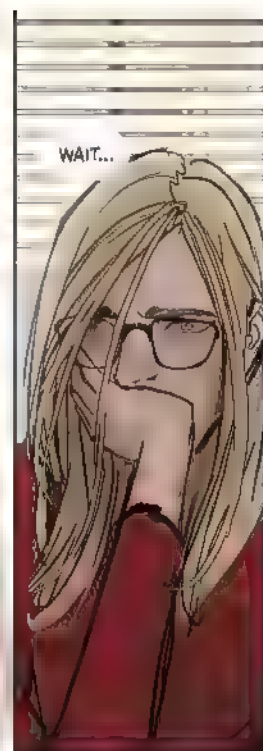
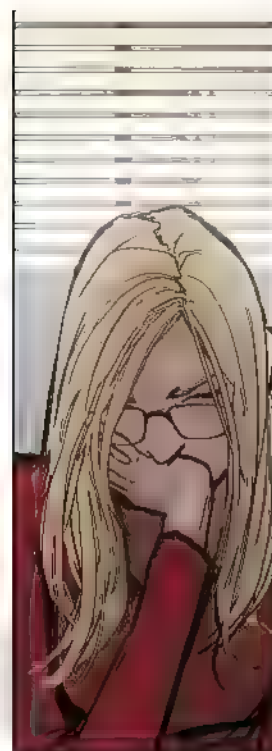
IN EVERY ONE
OF THOSE INSTANCES,
HIS VOICE WOULD LOSE
ITS *EDGE*, THAT RASPY
TONE REPLACED BY
SOMETHING...
SOFTER.
SOMETHING ALMOST
MELANCHOLIC.

WELL...
I GUESS THAT
MAKES ME FEEL A
LITTLE LESS CRAZY,
THEN.

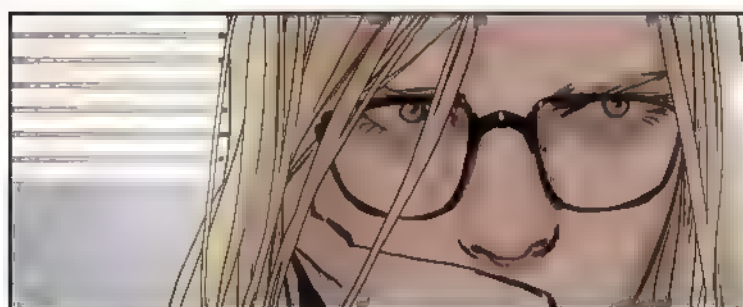
I THINK
THAT WILL BE ALL
FOR TODAY.



SOMETHING
WARM...HONEST.



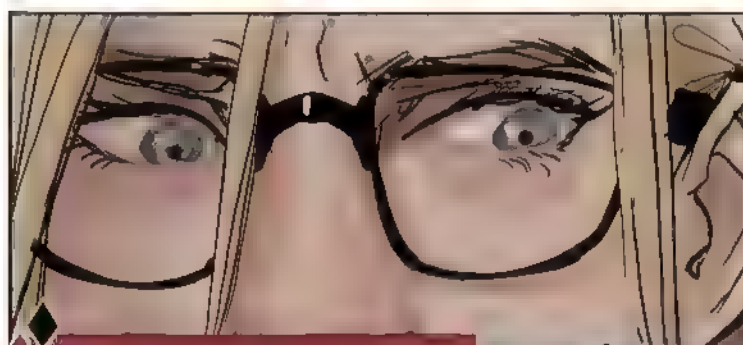
WAIT...



THAT MEANS
WE *TRICKED* SIX
DIFFERENT PSYCHIATRISTS
INTO BELIEVING HE WAS
THAT FAR GONE.

EITHER HE'S
THAT GOOD AT LYING,
OR THEY WERE THAT
FOOLISH, OR...

OR THEY
DIDN'T EVEN
CARE!



IS THAT WHAT
HUGO STRANGE
MEANT?

IN ALL HONESTY, I
THINK YOURS IS JUST ONE OF
MANY *CRACKPOT* THEORIES I'VE
SEEN IDEALISTIC YOUNG PSYCHIATRISTS
BRING TO THE TABLE LOOKING FOR
THE *HOWS* AND *WHYS* OF OUR...
RESIDENTS.



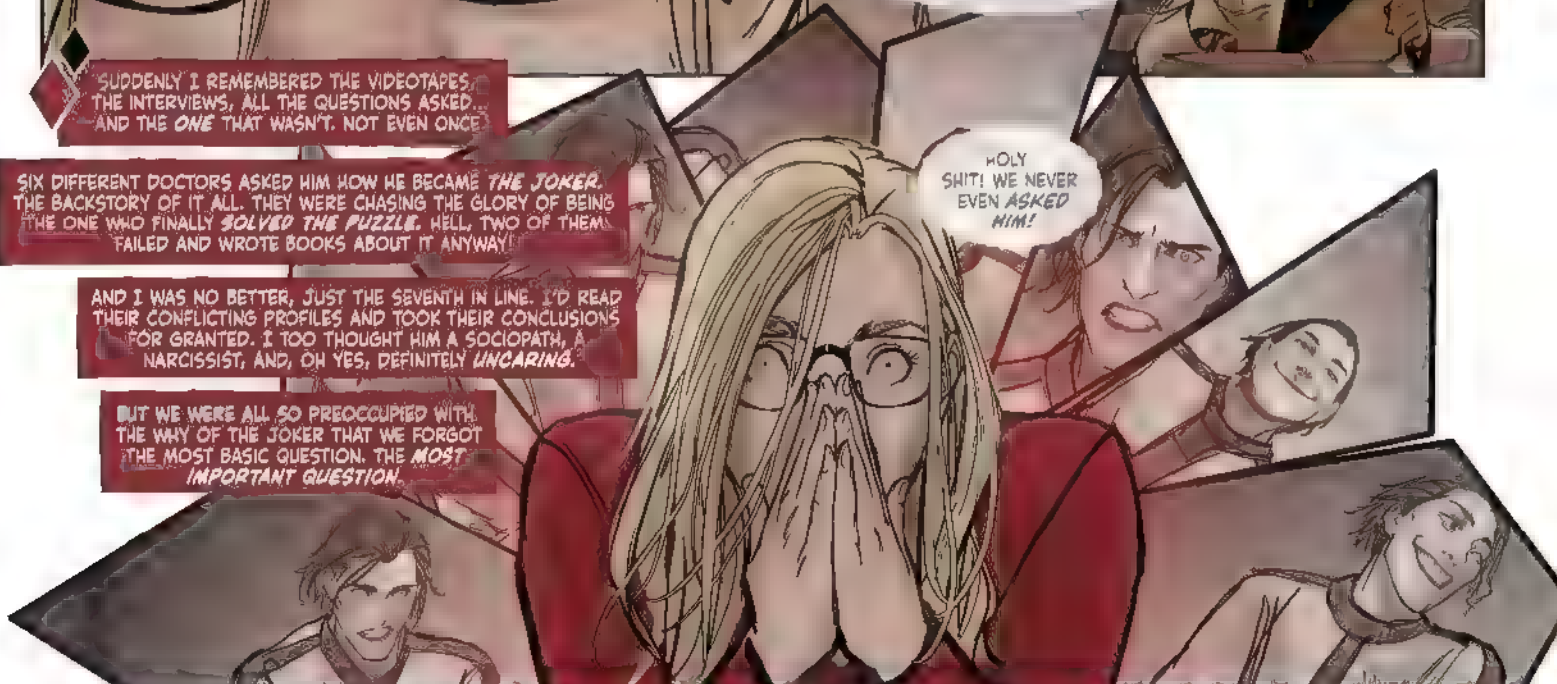
SUDDENLY I REMEMBERED THE VIDEOTAPES,
THE INTERVIEWS, ALL THE QUESTIONS ASKED,
AND THE *ONE* THAT WASN'T. NOT EVEN ONCE.

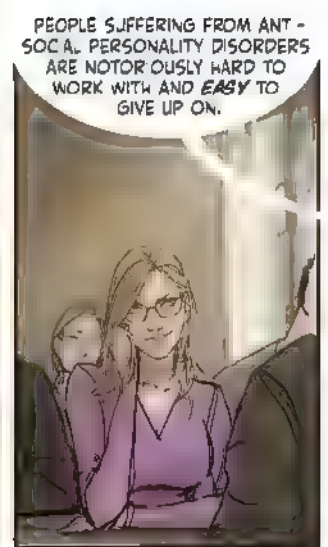
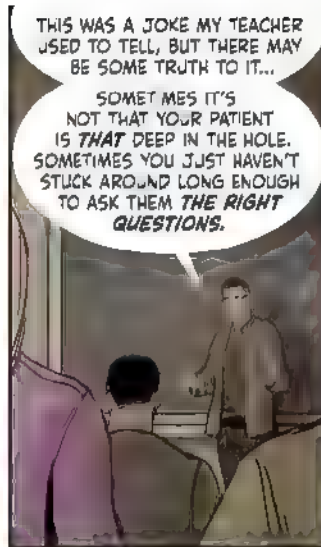
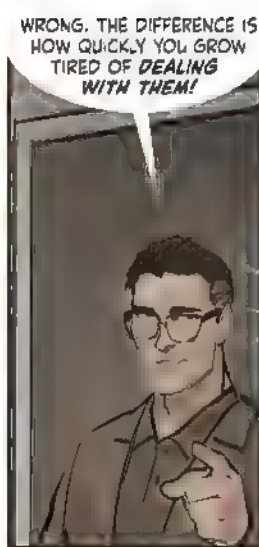
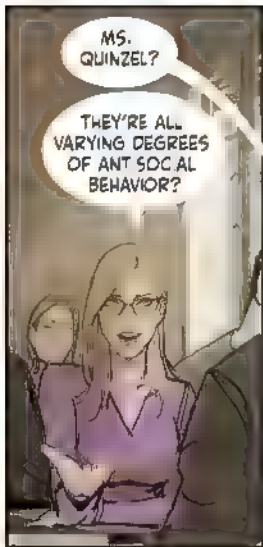
SIX DIFFERENT DOCTORS ASKED HIM HOW HE BECAME *THE JOKER*.
THE BACKSTORY OF IT ALL. THEY WERE CHASING THE GLORY OF BEING
THE ONE WHO FINALLY *SOLOVED THE PUZZLE*. HELL, TWO OF THEM
FAILED AND WROTE BOOKS ABOUT IT ANYWAY!

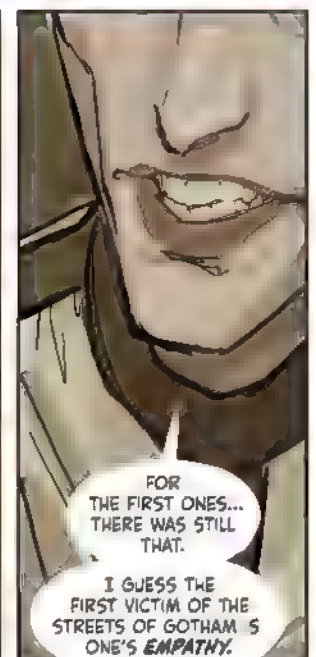
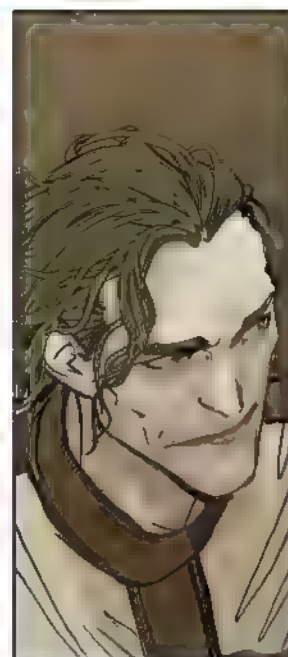
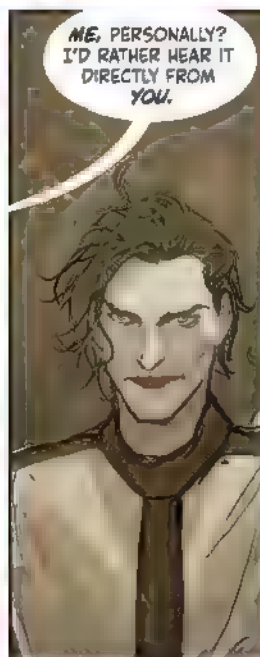
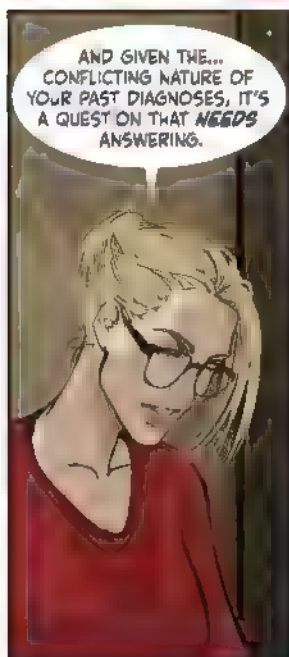
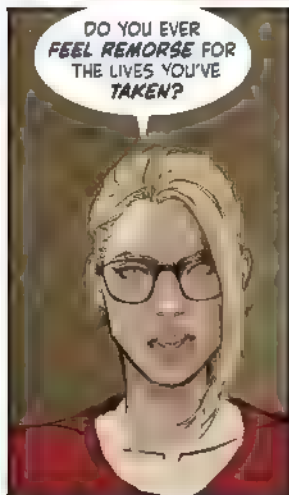
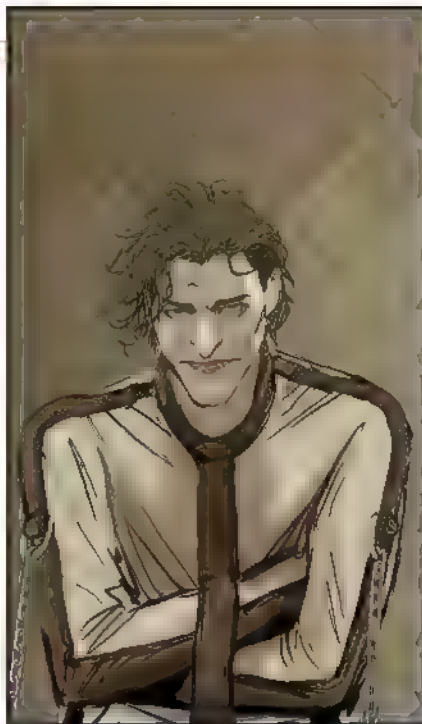
AND I WAS NO BETTER, JUST THE SEVENTH IN LINE. I'D READ
THEIR CONFLICTING PROFILES AND TOOK THEIR CONCLUSIONS
FOR GRANTED. I TOO THOUGHT HIM A SOCIOPATH, A
NARCISSIST, AND, OH YES, DEFINITELY *UNCARING*.

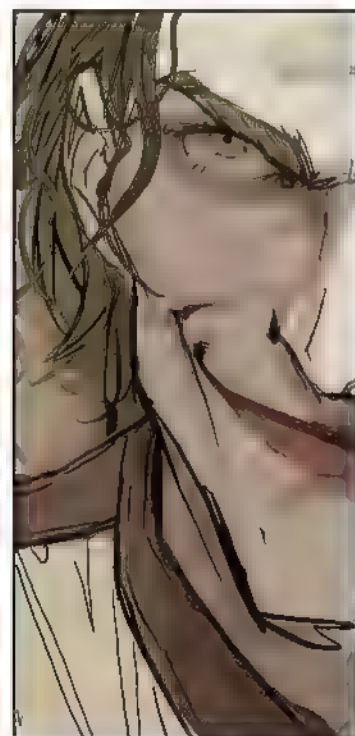
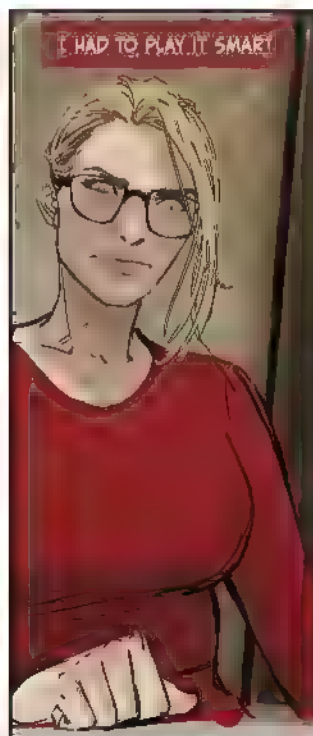
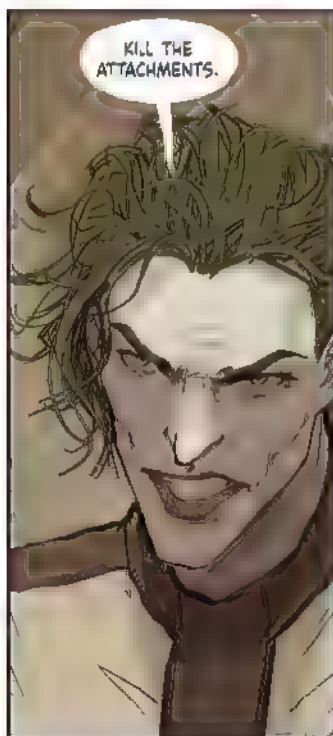
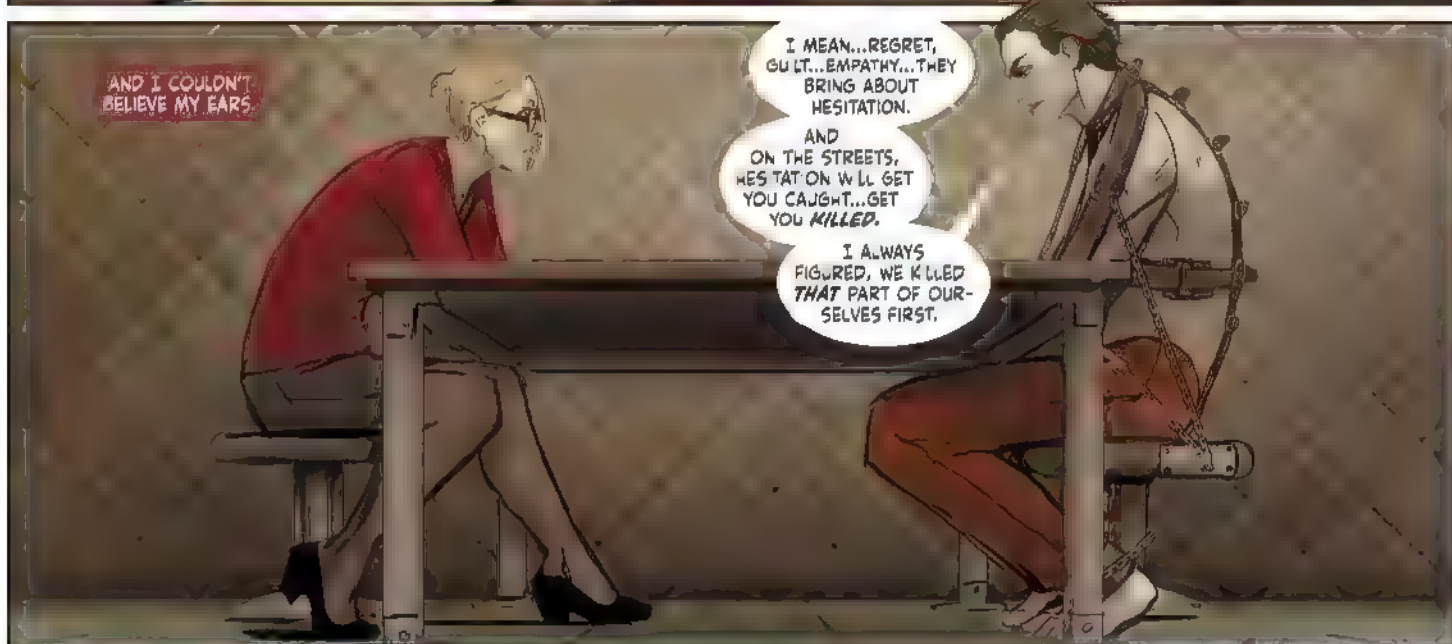
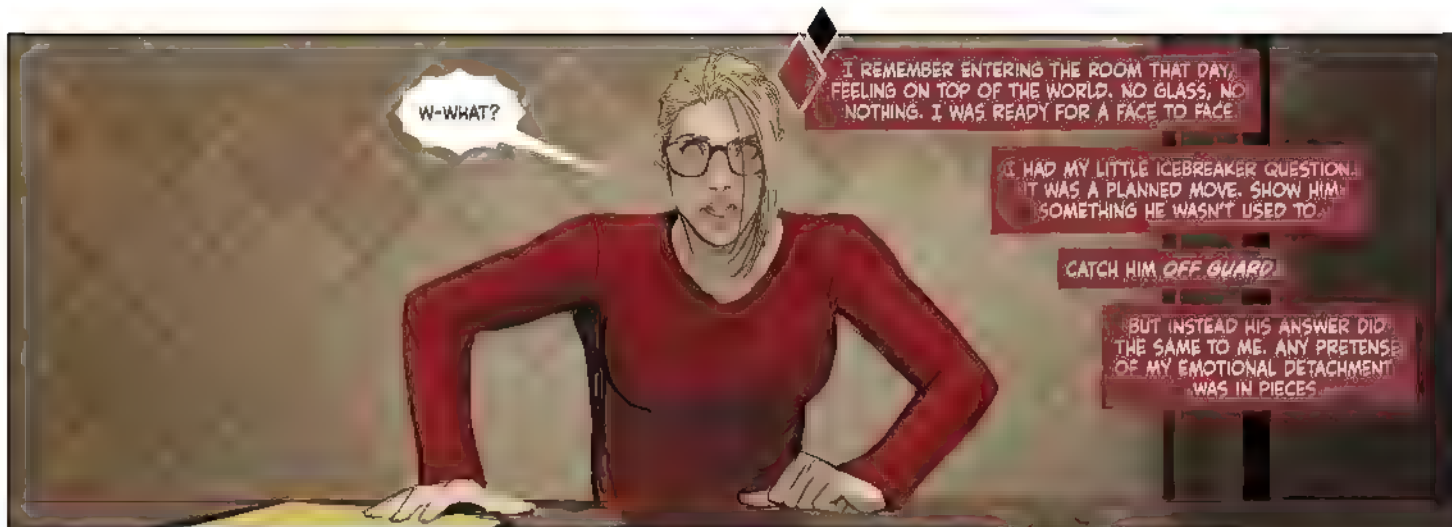
BUT WE WERE ALL SO PREOCCUPIED WITH
THE WAY OF THE *JOKER* THAT WE FORGOT
THE MOST BASIC QUESTION. THE *MOST*
IMPORTANT QUESTION.

HOLY
SHIT! WE NEVER
EVEN ASKED
HIM!











IN HINDSIGHT I PLAYED IT NEITHER
SMART NOR CAREFULLY. INSTEAD
I JUST TOOK THE BAIT.

HOW
DID IT START,
MR. JAY?

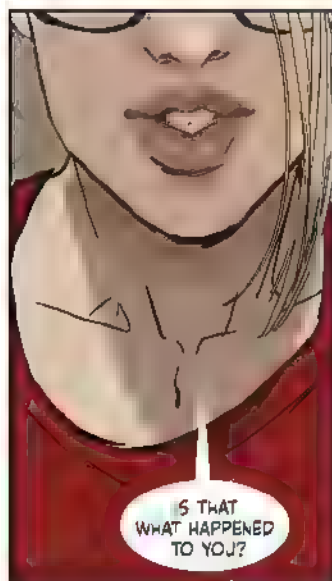
MY, GRANDMA...WHAT FASCINATING
MENTAL ISSUES YOU HAVE.

THE BETTER TO DRAW YOU
NEAR, MY DARLING.

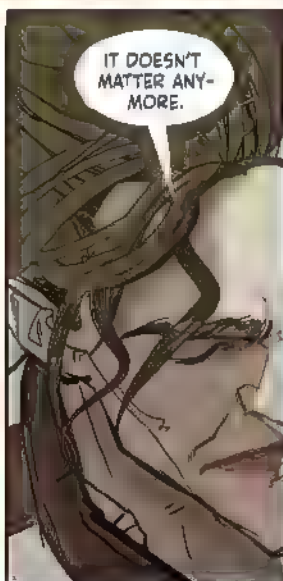
HOW DOES ONE
GO ABOUT KILLING THEIR
ATTACHMENTS...

YOU GET THAT
ONE BAD MOMENT WHEN THE
BURDEN OF THEM BECOMES
TOO MUCH...

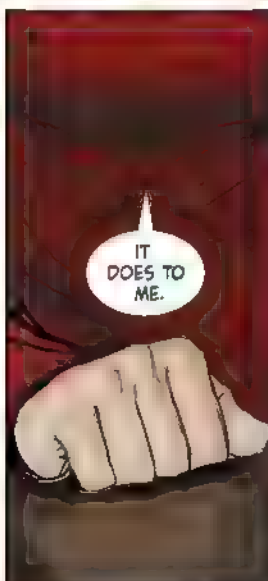
WHEN
YOU LOSE IT
ALL...



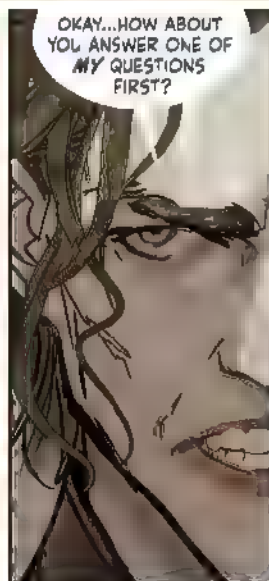
IS THAT
WHAT HAPPENED
TO YOU?



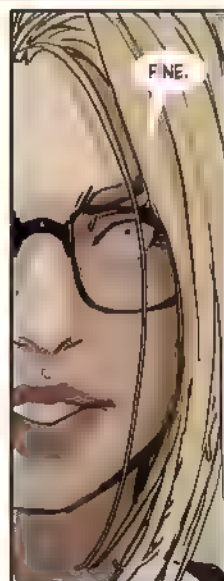
IT DOESN'T
MATTER ANY-
MORE.




IT
DOES TO
ME.



OKAY...HOW ABOUT
YOU ANSWER ONE OF
MY QUESTIONS
FIRST?



FINE.



HOW OFTEN
DO YOU WATCH ME
SLEEP?

I DON'T EVEN KNOW
HOW TO DESCRIBE IT.

IT'S AS IF, WHEN I JOURNEYED INTO
HIS HEAD, I LEFT A TRAIL BEHIND...

A TRAIL HE FOLLOWED.

I WAS LOOKING FOR THE BIG BAD
WOLF...AND NOW THERE HE WAS, HUFFING
AND PUFFING AT THE DOORS OF MY MIND.

AND GOD HELP ME. A SMALL, FUCKED-
UP PART OF ME WANTED TO LET HIM IN.

IT WAS INSANE. I HAD SPOKEN TO HIM
ONLY FOUR TIMES. THE FIRST TIME
HE HELD ME AT GUNPOINT.


HE GAVE ME MONTHS
OF NIGHTMARES.

AND...HE WANTED
TO SEE ME SMILE.

AND THAT WAS IT. HE NEEDED ME. THIS
SCARRED, BROKEN MAN NEEDED ME...
AND I WANTED TO BE THERE FOR HIM.

I WANTED TO
SMILE FOR HIM.

I NEEDED TO...



HOW OFTEN
DO YOU WATCH ME
SLEEP?

I DON'T EVEN KNOW
HOW TO DESCRIBE IT.

IT'S AS IF, WHEN I JOURNEYED INTO
HIS HEAD, I LEFT A TRAIL BEHIND...

A TRAIL HE FOLLOWED.

I WAS LOOKING FOR THE BIG BAD
WOLF...AND NOW THERE HE WAS, HUFFING
AND PUFFING AT THE DOORS OF MY MIND.

AND GOD HELP ME. A SMALL, FUCKED-
UP PART OF ME WANTED TO LET HIM IN.

IT WAS INSANE. I HAD SPOKEN TO HIM
ONLY FOUR TIMES. THE FIRST TIME
HE HELD ME AT GUNPOINT.

HE GAVE ME MONTHS
OF NIGHTMARES.

AND...HE WANTED
TO SEE ME SMILE.

AND THAT WAS IT. HE NEEDED ME. THIS
SCARRED, BROKEN MAN NEEDED ME...
AND I WANTED TO BE THERE FOR HIM.

I WANTED TO
SMILE FOR HIM.

I NEEDED TO...

**SNAP OUT OF IT AND
ASSUME CONTROL OVER THIS
RUNAWAY TRAIN OF A SITUATION**

UH. IT WAS
JUST THE **ONE TIME!**
I WAS...PASSING BY AND
I NOT CED YOUR
SCARS...

IS THAT **PITY** I HEAR IN
YOUR VOICE?

NO
NEED FOR THAT,
DOCTOR.

THEY ARE
BATTLE SCARS,
NOTHING MORE.

AND
ANYWAYS, I
BARELY FEEL
ANY PAIN

**PROFESSOR ONCE SAID
PSYCHIATRIST IS AN
ARCHEOLOGIST OF THE MIND**

**YOU GENTLY REMOVE LAYERS OF
DEFENSIVENESS, DENIAL, RESENTMENT,
AND SHAME. ONE QUESTION AT A TIME.**

YOU DON'T PUSH THEM.

**LIKE AN ARCHEOLOGIST, YOU GO
IN CAREFULLY WITH A SOFT BRUSH
AND A TENDER TOUCH.**

**BUT THAT DAY I FORGOT MY
BRUSH AND WENT STRAIGHT
FOR THE HAMMER.**

I'M **NOT**
LETTING THIS
GO!
I NEED
TO KNOW ABOUT
YOUR **LOSS!**

WHY?

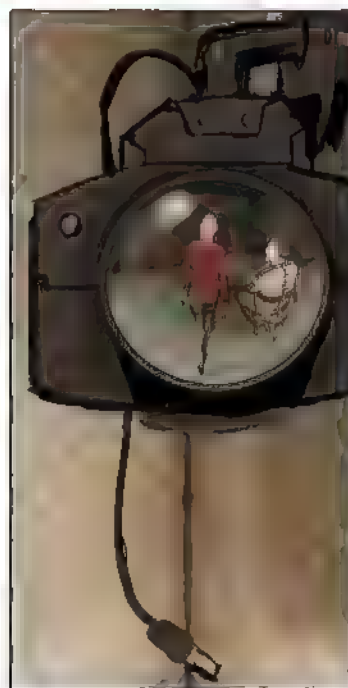
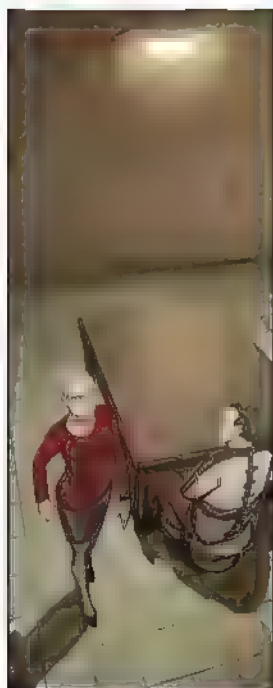
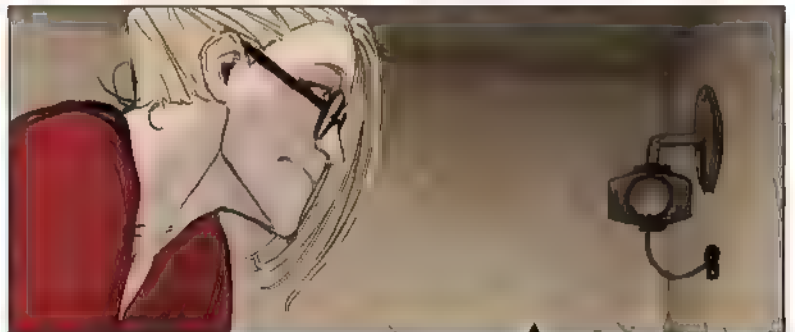
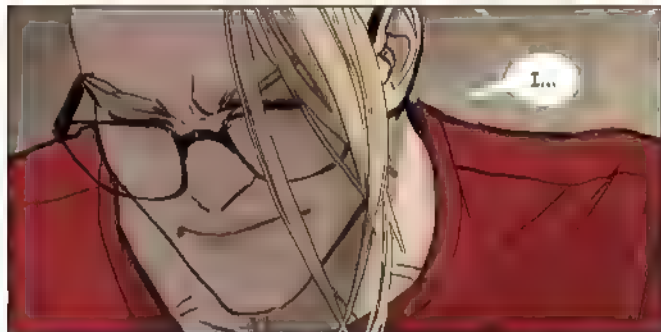
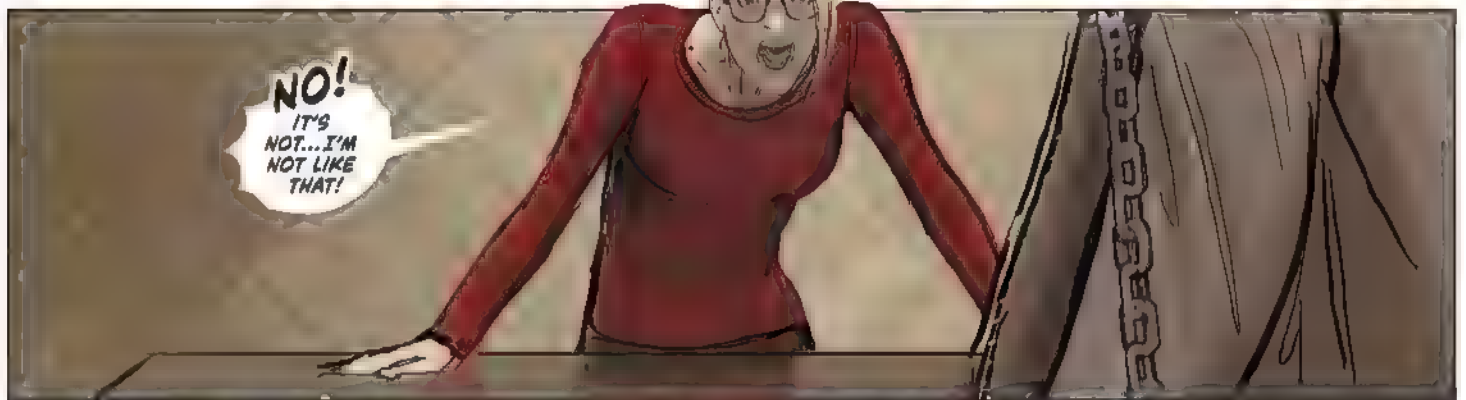
BECAUSE...
I WANT TO
HELP...

OH. **STOP**
IT, DOCTOR!

TELL ME, AND
HONESTLY!

WHY ARE YOU **HERE?**
SEE, I'LL GIVE YOU THIS:
YOU GOT ME TO TELL YOU MORE
ABOUT MYSELF THAN ANYONE
ELSE **EVER** DID. AND WHO
KNOWS, MAYBE IT'S
MY FAULT.

MAYBE I WAS
DWELLING TOO MUCH
ON WHY I WANTED TO SEE
YOU SMILE. MAYBE THAT'S
WHY I LET YOU IN...BUT IN
THE END, NONE OF IT
MATTERS.

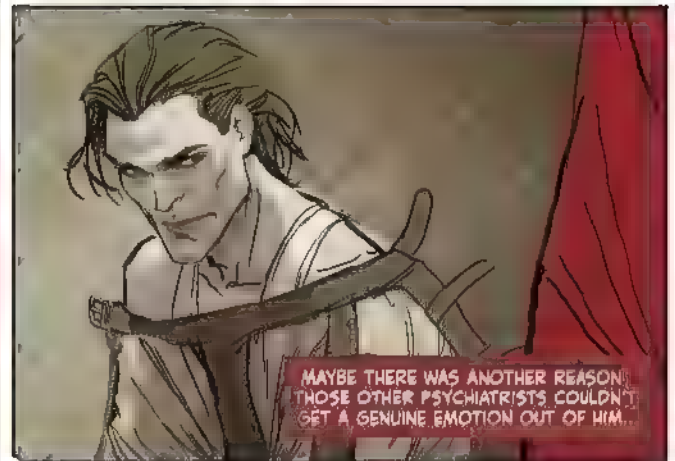


AND YOU KNOW WHAT? *THIS*
CERTAINLY QUALIFIED AS CRAZY.

IT WAS AN ADRENALINE-FUELED
MOVE OF DESPERATION.

AND IN THAT MOMENT I ALLOWED
THE THOUGHT I HAD BEEN RUNNING
AWAY FROM TO FINALLY TAKE SHAPE.

A TERRIFYING AND
DARKLY ALLURING IMAGE
THAT PLAGUED MY MIND.



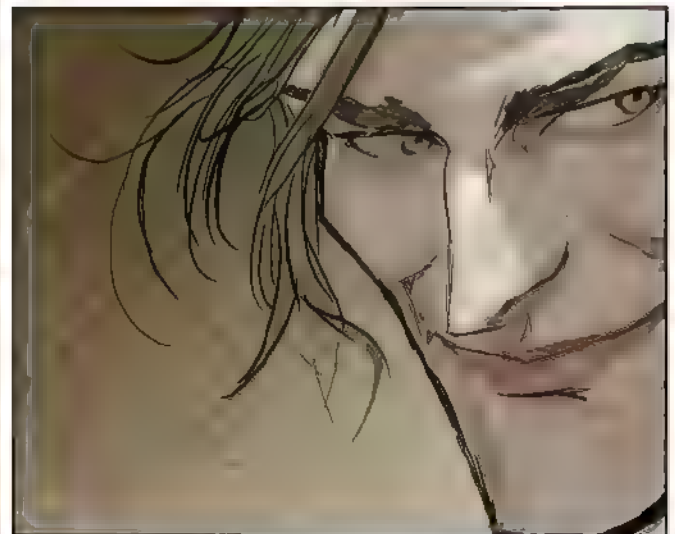
MAYBE THERE WAS ANOTHER REASON.
THOSE OTHER PSYCHIATRISTS COULDN'T
GET A GENUINE EMOTION OUT OF HIM.



MAYBE THE ANSWER WAS
STARING ME IN THE FACE.

MAYBE, JUST MAYBE SOMEWHERE
IN MY REPRESSED HEART I KNEW
IT AND FEARED IT BECAUSE...

BECAUSE, GOD HELP ME,
I MIGHT SMILE BACK AT HIM...

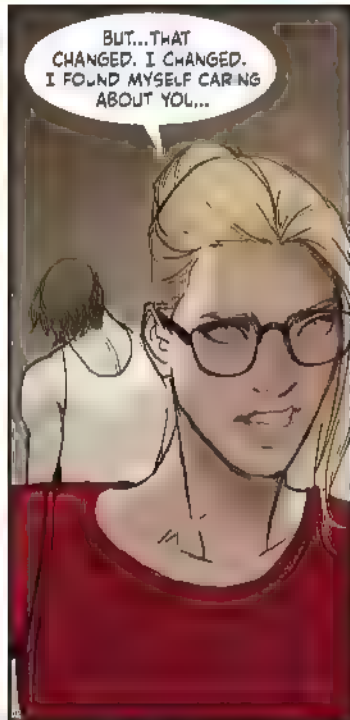
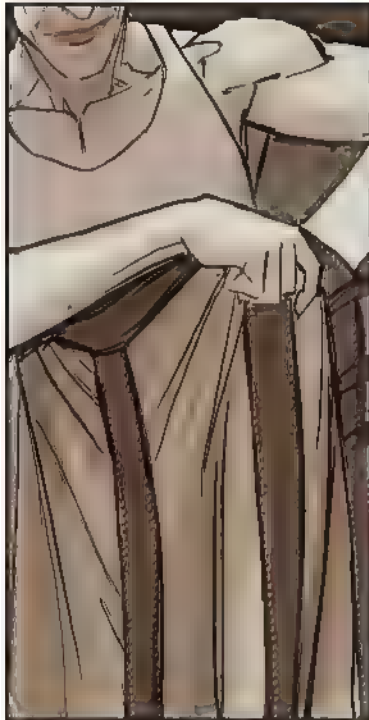




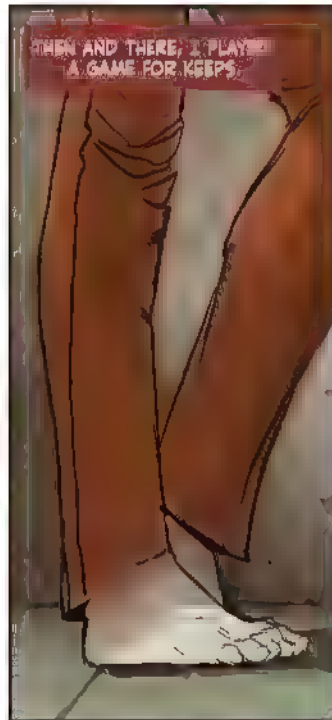
BUT I WASN'T SMILING, NOT YET

NO, IN THAT MOMENT I WAS TOO AWARE THAT IF THIS RISK DIDN'T PAY OFF, HE MIGHT DO *BY HAND* WHAT HE'D REFUSED TO DO *BY GUN*.

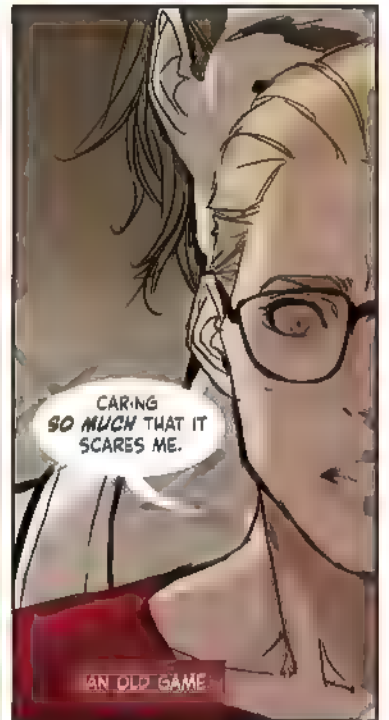
IT'S TRUE. I CAME HERE FOR MY OWN PURPOSE...



BUT...THAT CHANGED. I CHANGED. I FOUND MYSELF CARING ABOUT YOU...



THEN AND THERE, I PLAYED A GAME FOR KEEPS.



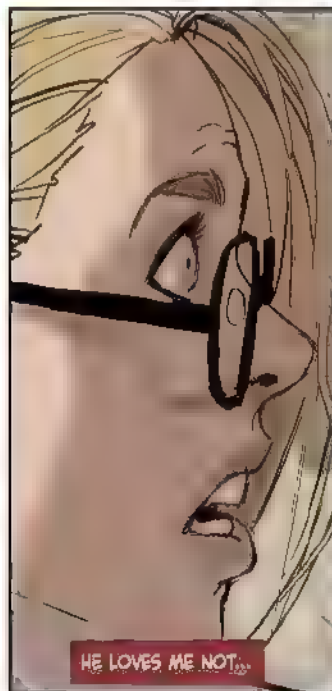
CARING SO MUCH THAT IT SCARES ME.

AN OLD GAME

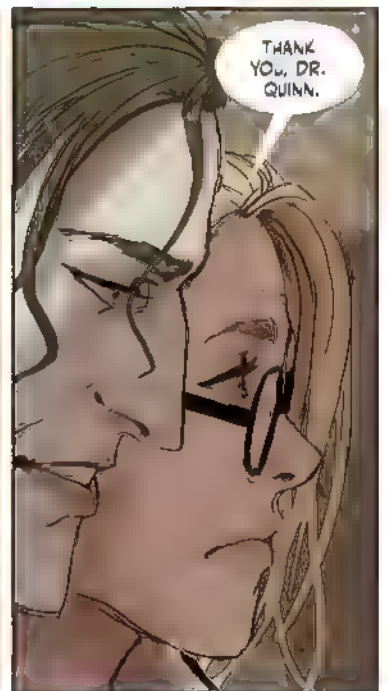


YOU... SCARE ME. AND YET...

YOU KNOW THE ONE. HE LOVES ME...



HE LOVES ME NOT...



THANK YOU, DR. QUINN.



THANK YOU
FOR CARING

HARLEY...
YOU
CAN CAL. ME
HARLEY...

HARLEY...QU NN
HEH...
I LIKE THAT...

I HAD A DREAM THAT NIGHT.

I DREAMED OF A LONG,
WINDING ROAD, OF BATS,
AND OF A GIANT BEAST.

I DREAMED OF A BROKEN MAN...

AND IN THE DREAM, I SMILED.

END OF CHAPTER TWO.



"THERE WAS
A BROKEN MAN
IN THE ABYSS..."

"...I REACHED DOWN
TO HELP HIM..."

"...I REALIZED
TOO LATE,
HE WASN'T SLIPPING..."

"...HE WAS
DRAGGING ME."



HARLEEN

BOOK THREE - IN STORES NOVEMBER



**BLACK
LABEL**

ANDY KHOURI

EDITOR

MAGGIE HOWELL

ASSISTANT EDITOR

DARRAN ROBINSON

PUBLICATION DESIGN

BOB HARRAS SENIOR VP - EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, DC COMICS
MARK DOYLE EXECUTIVE EDITOR, VERTIGO & BLACK LABEL

DAN DIDIO PUBLISHER

JIM LEE PUBLISHER & CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER

BOBBIE CHASE VP - NEW PUBLISHING INITIATIVES & TALENT DEVELOPMENT

DON FALLETTI VP - MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS & WORKFLOW MANAGEMENT

LAWRENCE GANEM VP - TALENT SERVICES

ALISON GILL SENIOR VP - MANUFACTURING & OPERATIONS

HANK KANALZ SENIOR VP - PUBLISHING STRATEGY & SUPPORT SERVICES

DAN MIRON VP - PUBLISHING OPERATIONS

NICK J. NAPOLITANO VP - MANUFACTURING ADMINISTRATION & DESIGN

NANCY SPEARS VP - SALES

MICHELE R. WELLS VP & EXECUTIVE EDITOR, YOUNG READER

HARLEEN 2, DECEMBER, 2019. PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY DC COMICS, 2900 W. ALAMEDA AVENUE, BURBANK, CA 91505. GST NO IS R125921072. COPYRIGHT © 2019 DC COMICS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. ALL CHARACTERS FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE, THE DISTINCTIVE LIKENESSES THEREOF, AND RELATED ELEMENTS ARE TRADEMARKS OF DC COMICS. THE STORIES, CHARACTERS, AND INCIDENTS MENTIONED IN THIS MAGAZINE ARE ENTIRELY FICTIONAL. DC COMICS DOES NOT READ OR ACCEPT UNSOLICITED SUBMISSIONS OF IDEAS, STORIES, OR ARTWORK. FOR ADVERTISING AND CUSTOM PUBLISHING CONTACT DCCOMICSADVERTISING@DCCOMICS.COM. FOR DETAILS ON DC COMICS RATINGS, VISIT DCCOMICS.COM/GO/RATINGS. DC - A WARNERMEDIA COMPANY.

HARLEEN



**"HEAVEN
HELP ME..."**



**"A SMALL PART
OF ME..."**



**"...WANTS
TO LET
HIM IN."**

A BRILLIANT YOUNG PSYCHIATRIST WITH THE CURE FOR THE MADNESS OF GOTHAM, DR. HARLEEN QUINZEL, TAKES DRASTIC MEASURES TO SAVE THE CITY FROM ITSELF. WITNESS THE BIRTH OF THE LEGENDARY SUPER-VILLAIN HARLEY QUINN IN THIS STUNNING REIMAGINING OF HARLEY AND THE JOKER'S TWISTED AND TRAGIC LOVE AFFAIR BY ACCLAIMED STORYTELLER STJEPAN SEJIC (*AQUAMAN: UNDERWORLD, SUNSTONE*).

MATURE READERS
DCCOMICS.COM

